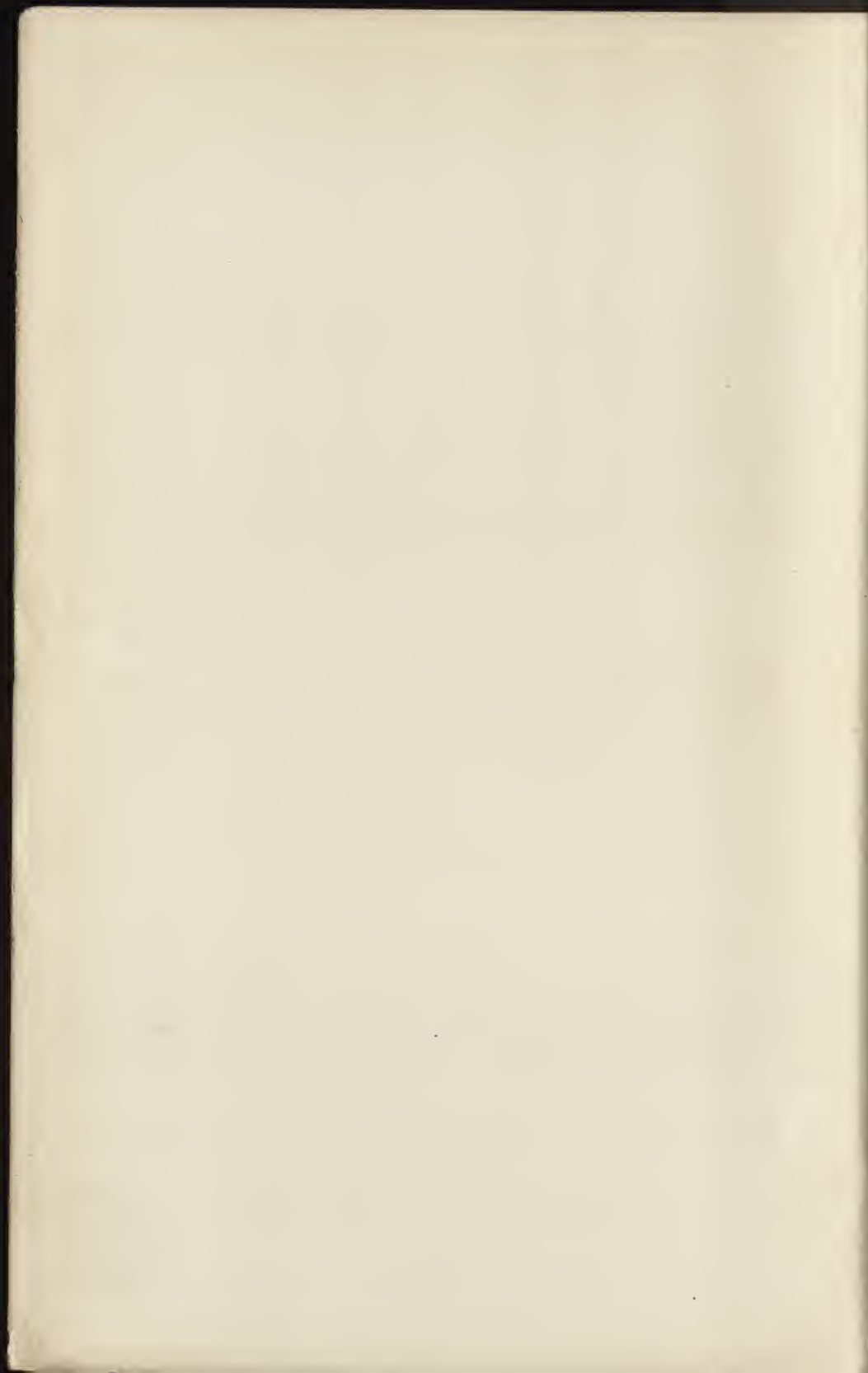


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W. L. Campbell - 1907



SOME BEAUTIES OF THE
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE FLIGHT OF THE KING

KING MONMOUTH

THE MEMOIRS OF THE MARTYR KING

AFTER WORCESTER FIGHT

PICTURESQUE OLD HOUSES

SECRET CHAMBERS AND HIDING-PLACES

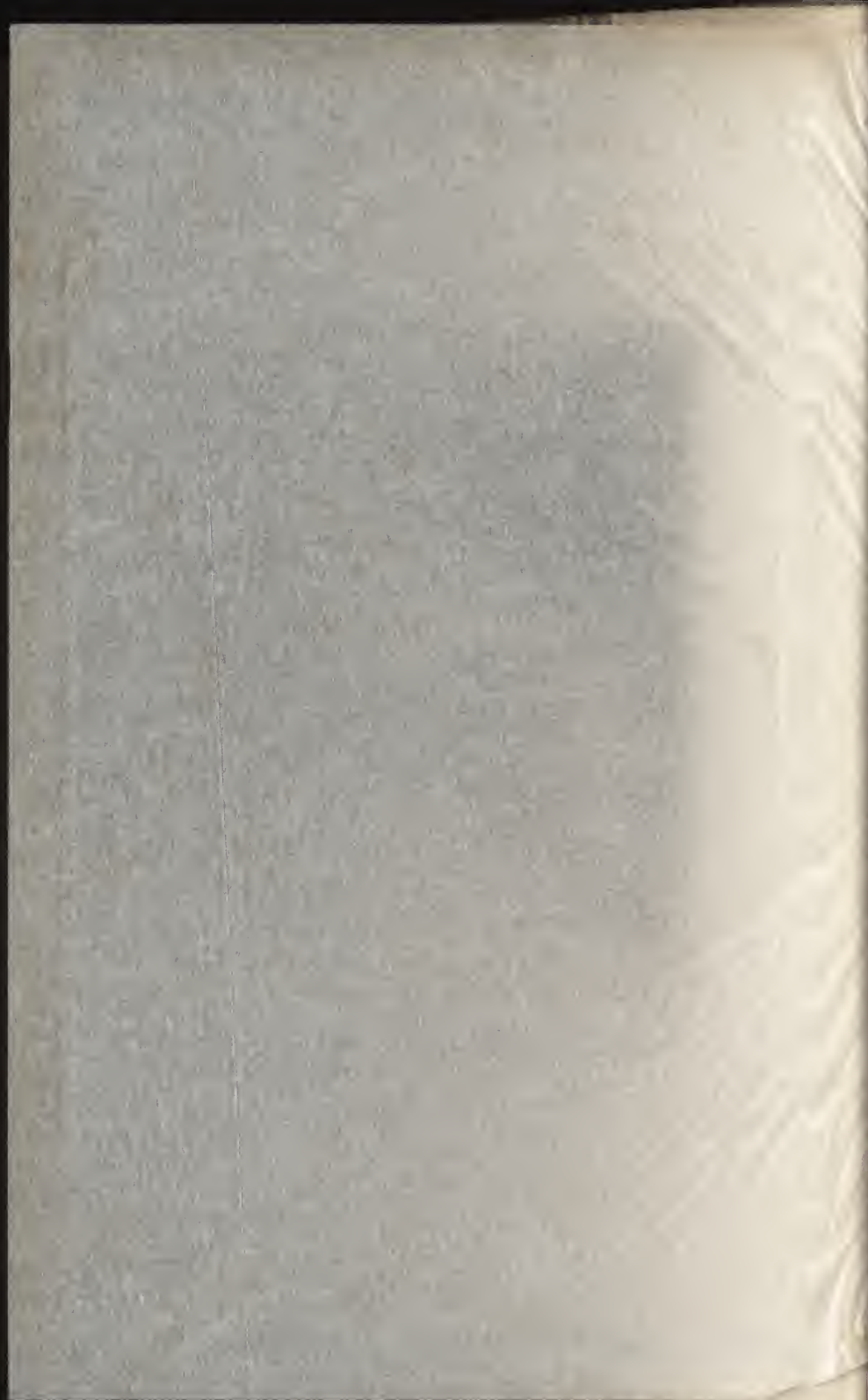
PICTORIAL EDITION OF THE MEMOIRS
OF COUNT DE GRAMONT





Louise de Keroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth
From a painting by Sir Peter Lely.





SOME BEAUTIES
OF THE
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

BY
ALLAN FEA

WITH EIGHTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS

METHUEN & CO.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON

First Published in 1906

TO
RIGHT HONOURABLE THE VISCOUNT DILLON

PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES

AND A TRUSTEE OF THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE KINDLY HELP AND ADVICE

GIVEN BY HIS UNRIVALLED KNOWLEDGE OF

THE HISTORY, PORTRAITURE, ETC., OF

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

“Those parts of thee, that the world's eye doth view
Want nothing, that the thought of hearts can mend :
All tongues (the voice of souls) give thee thy due,
Uttering bare truth, even so as foes commend.
Their outward thus with outward praise is crown'd,
But those same tongues that give thee so thy own,
In other accents do this praise confound,
By seeing further than the eye hath shewn.”

SHAKESPERE'S "Glory of Beauty"

PREFACE

WHEN that interesting collection of paintings known as "The Fair Women Exhibition" figured on the walls of the Grafton Gallery some twelve years ago, the directors frankly confessed that they did not know of any fixed standard of beauty by which to be guided in making their selection.

Comparatively speaking, to the task of the judges of a modern living beauty competition, theirs was an easy one, for the feelings of the ladies had not to be taken into account, nor their muscular development and power of retaliation should they be unsuccessful in drawing a prize. So varying are our ideals of beauty that the odds are a jury of twelve picked connoisseurs would never agree. And yet these things are officially settled somehow.

But here we have a narrower field, and consequently an easier one, although to do ample justice to the seventeenth century alone the work would necessarily have to extend to several volumes. We must, therefore, content ourselves more particularly with the latter half of it.

Comparing the engravings of Mrs. Jameson's well-known, though somewhat antiquated, work with the original paintings at Hampton Court, Althorp, &c., one is struck by the entire loss of character in many of the faces. The engraver is responsible for this, and nothing but photography can reproduce the sitter as the artist saw her. There are those who deplore the decay of the engravers' art, but for accuracy what can compare with our modern photogravures and process blocks?

I do not mean to say that Lely, Wissing, or Kneller have given us perhaps such truthful likenesses as Samuel Cooper. The fashionable painter Lely rarely lost sight of his own poetical ideal, which must account for the similarity of many of his female portraits. Thus we have Nell Gwyns who should be Lady Castlemaines, or Mary d'Estes and Duchesses of Somerset and Portsmouth who should rightly be named otherwise. Nor did Mrs. Jameson succeed in setting matters right when she engraved the famous "Windsor Beauties." Her portrait of "Anne Countess of Southesk" should rightly be Frances Brooke, Lady Whitmore, and her "Elizabeth, Duchess of Somerset," Mary Bagot Countess of Falmouth¹; while her "Emilie Countess of Ossory," properly should be Elizabeth Percy Duchess of Somerset—her "Elizabeth Butler Countess of Chesterfield," should be Elizabeth *Dormer*, her successor (the *third* wife of Philip, the second Earl),

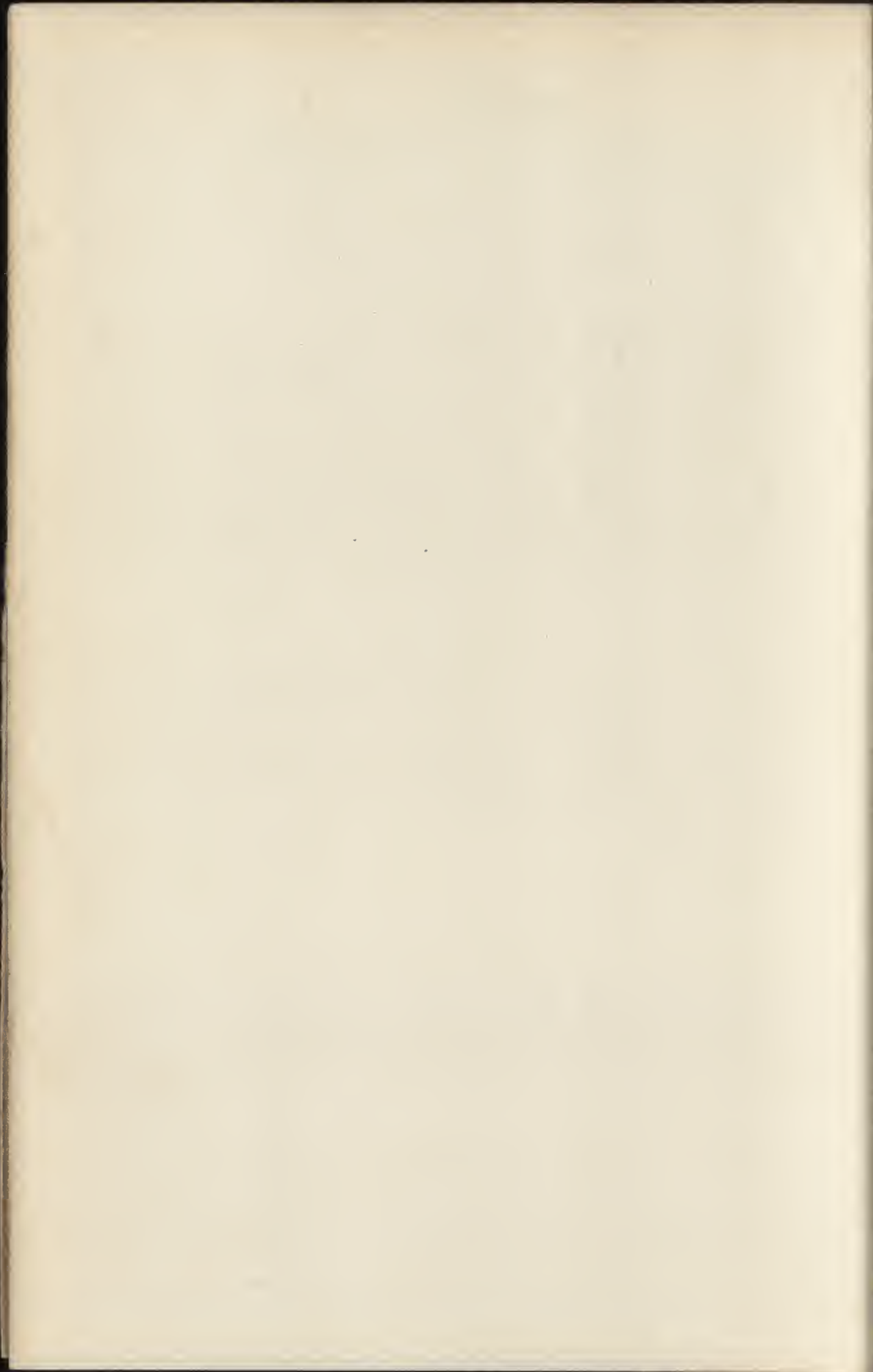
¹ Her name was Mary, not Elizabeth as usually stated.

and Lady Denham should correctly be named, not "Elizabeth," but Margaret.

But as I have gone into these matters in my edition of "The Memoirs of Count de Gramont" it is not necessary here to dwell upon the importance of the correct naming of historical portraits.

I cannot conclude these prefatory remarks without expressing my grateful thanks to the following owners of original paintings for kindly allowing them to be here reproduced :—The Duke of Buccleuch, the Duke of Portland, the Duke of Newcastle, Earl Spencer, the Earl of Craven, the Earl of Sandwich, the Earl of Darnley, Viscount Dillon, Sir J. G. Tollemache Sinclair, Bart., Sir Charles Lawes-Wittewronge, Bart., Lady Chermside, Richard Myddelton, Esq., Godfrey Fitz Hugh, Esq. To the following I have also to acknowledge my indebtedness :—S. H. H. Isaacson, Esq., W. A. Baird, Esq., William Wright, Esq., W. Walter Whitmore, Esq., S. M. Ellis, Esq., W. Spicer, Esq., W. H. Sutcliffe, Esq., Dudley Heath, Esq., T. J. Smith, Esq., and H. C. Amendt, Esq.

A. F.



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2 SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY BEAUTIES

undermining the power, and plotting the downfall, of the unpopular French mistress.

A powerful rival was wanted, and the very temptress required by scheming Arlington and Montagu was found in Cardinal Mazarin's niece, who had never failed to conquer hearts far less susceptible than that of Charles.

The Duchess had long enjoyed a world-wide reputation, and her romantic history, in addition to her personal charms, was well calculated to fan the flame that had been ignited years before ; for the easy-going monarch had not forgotten his early attachment. Sixteen years had passed away since the young exile had posed as her lover, although he had had as little success as when he proposed to his proud cousin Montpensier. Matters changed, however, when the Restoration was brought about. The Queen-mother, ostensibly upon a visit of congratulation to her son, came over from France to renew the negotiation, and the King was willing enough to take the handsome girl with her acceptable marriage portion of twenty million livres. But his advisers considered it beneath his dignity to accept in affluence an offer that had been refused in adversity, so the young enchantress fell to the lot of the Duc de Meilleraye, who assumed the title of Duc de Mazarin.

So, after the lapse of sixteen years, the handsome Italian came over to England with the express purpose of occupying a more equivocal position at Whitehall.

Alas ! that gossiping Mr. Pepys should have closed his invaluable peepshow ere she came to take the Court by storm. What stories we should have had of fair noses being put out of joint ! How the dazzling Duchess would have enthralled the susceptible chronicler's heart, and where would the beauteous Stewart or languishing Castlemaine have been in comparison ?

The new beauty's conquest was both rapid and complete. Owing to ill-health, the Duchess of Portsmouth's star had been upon the wane for some time past, and her imperious rival, Castlemaine, now also elevated to a duchess, no longer was in favour. As the poor Queen had been forced to submit, so had these two sultanas in their turn. "Sweet Nell" was then first favourite, but when this new rival appeared upon the scene she deliberately threw up the cap and donned deep mourning as an emblem of her own dead prospects.

A week or so after the new Duchess appeared at Court, Evelyn records dining with the "errant lady," as he terms her, at the Lord Chamberlain's in company with the young Duke of Monmouth and his half-sister, the little Countess of Sussex ; and a few days before the King's death he makes another allusion to her—the oft-quoted Sunday scene in Whitehall Gallery with Charles dividing his attentions between her and the two reinstated mistresses, Portsmouth and Cleveland.

Hortense reigned supreme for a couple of years or so, but her gallantries and ill-disguised preference for

the Prince of Monaco cooled the King's ardour so far that, for a time, her allowance of four thousand pounds was stopped.

But for the antecedents of this extraordinary woman, whose power over the stronger sex reminds one somewhat of Miladi of "The Three Musketeers."

Hortense was the third and handsomest daughter of Lorenzo Mancini, a powerful Italian nobleman who had married Cardinal Mazarin's sister, Jeromina. Her parental house was in Rome, in the street "del Corso," but she was removed from here at a very tender age to be educated under the eye of her uncle at Paris. Here Charles II., before he came to his own, had pleaded for her hand when she was little more than ten years of age. Another three years and she was married. The Cardinal died shortly afterwards and left his favourite niece a fortune of over a million and a half.

The Duchess in her "Memoirs" alludes to her uncle's severity and the "tyrannical subjection" under which she and her sisters were kept, but also to "the insensibility and carelessness we had for all things to which too much plenty and prosperity reduces persons of this age, in spite of all their good nature." She received a great cabinet containing ten thousand gold pistoles when the alliance was concluded, but divided the greater part of it among her brothers and sisters.

"One day," she goes on, "wanting other divertisement, we threw above three hundred pistoles out at the



HORTENSE MANCINI, DUCHESS OF MAZARIN

windows of the Palace Mazarin to have the pleasure of seeing the servants that were in the court to scramble and fight for them. This prodigality being told the Cardinal, it caused so much displeasure in him that it is believed it hastened his end ; but whether it was so or no, he died within eight days after and left me the richest heiress, but the unhappiest woman in Christendom. Upon the first tidings of his death, my brother and my sister, instead of being sorry, cried to one another, 'God be thanked he is gone.' And to tell the truth I was not much more afflicted. And it is a remarkable thing that a man of that merit, that all his life had laboured to raise and enrich his family, should never receive other thanks from them than apparent signs of hatred and aversion even after his death."

The Gallery of the Palais Mazarin (now the Manuscript Department of the National Library) was famous for the sumptuous entertainments given by the Cardinal, surrounded by his beautiful nieces. Balls, banquets, and lotteries. Of the last we get a peep from the pen of the Marquise de Montespan, who describes the gold boxes, chains of pearls, and diamond ornaments spread out on countless tables.

The tickets were distributed with every appearance of honesty and good faith, although they had presumably been registered beforehand. "The young Queen," says Madame la Marquise, "who felt her garter slipping off, came close to me in order to

tighten it. She handed me her ticket to hold for a moment, and when she had fastened her garter I gave her back my ticket instead of her own. When the Cardinal from his dais read out the numbers in succession, my number won a portrait of the King set in brilliants, much to the surprise of the Queen-mother and his Eminence. They could not get over it!"¹

A more ill-suited pair than the young Duchess and her husband it would be difficult to imagine. The child-wife, wayward, flattered, and spoiled, with a romantic fancy for madcap pranks; the husband, an eccentric and rigid fanatic and monomaniac who, believing he was inspired, travelled the country with a party of religious enthusiasts preaching of visions and trying to convert people. He was jealous in the extreme of his beautiful and vivacious young wife, and had all her movements watched narrowly. He removed her from the gaieties of the Court, and became suspicious of the young King, who always had had a great regard for her and her sisters. Her movements were harassed in every way. She was being continually lectured on the folly of her ways. It was wrong to go out driving in public or to go to the play, and a sin to play at blind-man's-buff or to go to bed late. To correct these evil ways she was made to travel about with him in the country, in the most desolate and lonely places, where there was never any company

¹ "Memoirs of Madame de Montespan."

and where their lodgings were of the most wretched description.

“I began to be weary of making so many idle journeys,” writes the unfortunate lady. At a country house near Sedan her brother, having pity for her loneliness, came to visit her, but even of him the eccentric husband became jealous and suspicious. He had, she said, “an implacable hatred against all those I loved or loved me ; an indefatigable care to bring into my presence all those I hated mortally, and to corrupt those of my servants whom I most trusted to betray my secrets if I had any ; a studious application to cry me down everywhere and make my actions odious to all people.”

The crisis at length came when the Duke, having deprived her of most of the valuables she had inherited from her uncle, took possession of her jewels fearing, as he said, her free and liberal nature. The Duchess refused to go to bed until they were returned to her ; but as he did not comply, she left the house and went to her brother's palace. After a couple of months separation she was persuaded to return to her husband from the Hotel de Soissons, where she had principally lived. The reunion, however, was but temporary ; the Duchess, seeing she was to be kept a prisoner in her own house, fled the second time, with the result that she was placed in the Abbey of Chelles under the care of her husband's aunt, the abbess. From here she was removed to the nunnery of St. Mary's of the Bastille.

8 SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY BEAUTIES

The Duke, coming one day to see his wife, was much upset to find she wore patches (then recently brought into fashion) upon her face. He commanded her to remove them, but she refused ; there was a scene, and they parted as little friends as before.

The monotonous life at "the monastery," as she calls the establishment, was relieved in a measure by the arrival of another equally vivacious Court lady, the Marquise de Courcelles, *née* Sidonie de Lénoncourt, who had only just been married and was then only in her fifteenth year. The personal attractions of this lady, which, with supreme modesty (!), she describes in detail in her "Memoirs," already had a lover in Louvois, hence the cause of her incarceration in the religious establishment.

"As she was a very beautiful person," says the Duchess, "and of a very pleasant humour, I had complaisance enough for her to join with her in playing some tricks to the nuns. The King was told an hundred ridiculous stories about it ; that we used to put ink into the holy water pot to smut the good old nuns ; that we used to run through their dormitory, at the time of their first sleep, with a great many little dogs, yelping and yellowing ; and twenty other such fooleries, either altogether invented or much exaggerated. As for example, having desired them to let us have some water to wash our feet, the nuns agreed among themselves to refuse us what was necessary, and to find fault, as if we had been put in there to observe

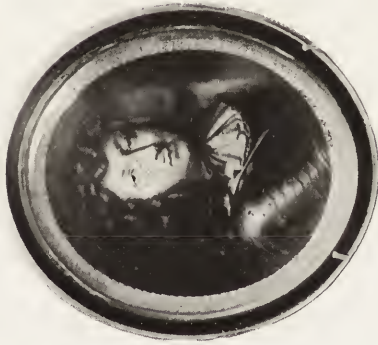
their rule. It is true that we filled two great chests that were over the dormitory with water, and not taking notice that the floor was ill-jointed, the water ran through and wet all the poor nuns' beds. If you were at that time at Court, you would easily remember that this accident was represented there as a mere horse-boy's prank. It is also true, that under colour of keeping us company, they would never suffer us to go out of their sight. The eldest among the nuns were chosen for this purpose, as being the hardest to be bribed; but we, having nothing else to do but run about, soon tired them out one after another, and one or two of them sprained their legs striving to run after us. . . . After we had been three months in this convent we had leave to go to Chelles, where I knew we should be more civilly treated; though we could not have so many visits; and Monsieur Mazarin arrived the same day from Brittany that we were removed thither. Some few days after Monsieur Mazarin comes with a guard of threescore horse, with leave from the Archbishop of Paris to enter the monastery and carry me away by force. But the Abbess not only refused him entrance, but put all the keys of the house into my hands, to free me from the suspicion of the evil she might have done me; with this condition only, that I would speak to Monsieur Mazarin. I asked him what he would have? But he still replied, I was not the Abbess. I answered him, I was the Abbess for him that day, since all the keys of the house were

in my power and there was no getting in for him but by my favour. He turned his back and went his way.

“A gentleman that the Countess [of Soissons]¹ sent to know how I did, carried this news to Paris, and said that it was reported at Chelles, that Monsieur Mazarin went off only with design to return again in the night. You have heard, without doubt, how Madame de Bouillon,² the Count de Soissons, the Duke de Bouillon, and the best and greatest persons about the Court got on horseback upon this report, to come to my rescue. At the noise they made, Madame de Courcelles and I took them for my enemies, but our fear was not so great but that we thought upon an expedient to hide ourselves. There was a hole in the grate of our parlor big enough for a great dish to pass, and we never till then thought one could creep through it. Yet we both got in that hole, but it was with so much difficulty, that if Monsieur Mazarin himself had been in that parlor he would never suspect that place, and would have looked for us anywhere else than there. But when we found our error, the shame and confusion we were in made us resolve to shoot that gulph once more without calling anybody to our aid. Madame de Courcelles got easily through, but I was above a quarter of an hour betwixt two bars of iron, and almost squeezed

¹ The Duchess's sister, Olympia Mancini.

² The Duchess's sister, Maria Anna Mancini, Duchess de Bouillon.



ARMAND DE LA MEULHERAYE,
DUC DE MAZARIN



MARIE MANCINI,
PRINCESS COLONNA



OLYMPIA MANCINI,
COMTESSE DE SOISSONS



to death, without being able to get in or out. But though I was so horribly pinched I would not consent any should be called to help us; and Madame de Courcelles never left tugging until she had me out. I went to thank them all; and after they had joked a while upon Monsieur Mazarin's attempt to catch nothing, they all returned back."

The companion of the Duchess was afterwards escorted by another admirer, the Marquis du Boulay, to Geneva. When Hortense came to London to try and captivate Charles II., this beauty also paid a visit with the same purpose, but her friend saw that she did not succeed, and soon persuaded her to go back to her own country.

The Duke and Duchess of Mazarin, after several appeals to the law, at length, by the intercession of the King, were brought together again, and it was arranged that they should occupy a separate suite of apartments in the Palace Mazarin. They saw one another occasionally in the afternoon, but that was all. But this amicable arrangement was upset by a theatrical performance which the Duchess was preparing for the amusement of some of her friends. The day fixed for the entertainment was a holy-day, and the Duke, exasperated, gave directions that the stage should be pulled down shortly before the play was to have commenced.

This and many other vexations, and the fact that her husband was applying for a Parliamentary decree

for the restitution of conjugal rights, induced Hortense to seek refuge in flight.

In the early hours of the morning of June 14, 1668, the Duke sought an audience with King Louis, for his wife had fled, and he wanted a warrant for her arrest. The monarch, however, declined to interfere, so the fugitive journeyed unimpeded to Milan, arrangements having previously been made by her brother and his friend the Chevalier de Rohan. In the excitement of her departure she forgot to take with her her box of money and jewels. Having got as far as the Gate of St. Anthony, she thought of this very necessary accompaniment, and sent back for it. When the news of the runaway Duchess reached Whitehall, Charles was struck by this cool action of sending back for her valuables. "The sudden retreat of Madame Mazarin," he wrote to his favourite sister, "is as extraordinaire an action as I have heard. She has exceeded my Lady Shrewsbury in point of discretion by robbing her husband! I see wives do not love devoute husbands, which reason this woman had, besides many more, as I heare, to be rid of her husband, upon any termes, and so I wish her a good journey."¹

The account of her adventures are best given in her own words:—"My train consisted of a maid I had but six months, called Nannon, dressed in man's apparel, as I was; a man of my brother's called

¹ Letters from Charles to Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans, June, 1668.

Narcissus, with whom I had no acquaintance; and a gentleman belonging to Monsieur de Rohan, called Courbeville, whom I had never seen before. My brother desired Monsieur de Rohan not to leave me until he had seen me out of town. I parted with him without the Gate of St. Anthony, and drove on in a coach with six horses, to a house belonging to the Princess of Guimené, his mother, ten leagues from Paris. From thence I went six or seven leagues in a *calèche*, but these kind of carriages were too slow for my fears, therefore I took horse and arrived at Bar, the Friday following, about noon; from thence (seeing myself out of France) I went no further than Nancy that night. The Duke of Lorraine, hearing of my arrival, and desiring to see me, was so civil as not to press it, when he understood I was unwilling. The Resident of France was very earnest to have me stopped there, but in vain; and the Duke, to complete his generosity, gave me a lieutenant and twenty of his guards to conduct me into Switzerland.

“We were almost everywhere known to be women; and Nannon still, through forgetfulness, called me ‘Madam.’ Whether for this reason, or that my face gave some cause of suspicion, the people watched us through the keyhole, when we had shut ourselves in, and saw our long tresses, which, as soon as we were at liberty, we untied, because they were very troublesome to us under our perriwigs.

“Nannon was extream low of stature, and so unfit

to be clothed in man's apparel that I could never look upon her without laughing. The night that I lay at Nancy, where we reassumed our women's apparel, I was so overjoyed to see myself out of danger that I gave myself the liberty of diverting me a little at my ordinary sports; and as I ran after her to laugh at her, I fell on my knee and hurt it. I did not feel it then, but some days after, having caused a bed to be made in a sorry village in Franche Comté in order to rest myself while dinner was preparing, such a grievous pain took me of a sudden in that knee that I was not able to rise. But on I must go; therefore, having been let blood by a woman, for want of another chirurgion, I followed my journey in a litter till I came to Neuschatel, where the people persuaded themselves that I was Madame de Longueville.¹ You cannot imagine the joy the people expressed to see me, being not used to see women of quality of France pass through their country; nor could they comprehend that any other but the Duchess of Longueville could have business that way. I know some would have laid hold of this occasion and made use of their kindness to taste of the sweetness of sovereignty. After all, the mistake was advantageous to me, and what I wanted in age I gained in quality.

“But power and authority seemed to me too great and too good for a fugitive. I was so unskilfully

¹ The great beauty, Anne, Duchess de Longueville, daughter of Henry, Prince of Condé.

handled there that my pain grew worse, insomuch that I had once thoughts of returning to Paris ; and were it not that Milan was nearer, and that I hoped to be sooner and safer there, I had pursued my first thoughts.

“Some few days after, I passed through a little town of Switzerland that had a garrison, where we were all like to be knocked on the head by our ignorance of their language, and, to compleat our happiness, we understood when we came to Altorf, that we must make our quarantine there before we should be suffered to enter the territories of Milan. There it was my stock of patience was quite spent ; for I saw myself in a barbarous country, most desperately sick, full of grievous pain ; and for help you shall judge by what hap'ned to Narcissus whether there was much to be hoped for in that place. For, he ailing something, sent for a chirurgion to let him blood ; they brought him a farrier, who, going to let his blood with his fleam, missed the vein, and Narcissus, threatening to kill him, the fellow still answered coldly, ‘That he had not angered the artery.’”

The unfortunate Duchess's leg at length got so bad that she was contemplating having it amputated, but was persuaded to the contrary by the attentive Couberville.

Soon after her departure, the fugitive received in a poem by her brother-in-law, Lorenzo, Prince Colonna, Constable of Naples, a brief account of the effect her flight had upon her husband. The English translation

is strangely suggestive of Ingoldsby as will be seen from the following extract :—

“ Know then your kind Duke makes a damnable rout.
He frets and he fumes and he wanders about.
And all to enquire his Mazarin out.

* * * * *

He'll seize you by rorce where ever he meets.
And when you in his clutches but once more he gets,
For all your brisk champions he'll care not a rope.
He'll keep you in sight of King, Emperor, and Pope.”

The poet's wife, Marie Mancini, Princess Colonna, received her younger sister in her house near Rome. She had been the early flame of “le Grand Monarque,” who would have married her had the Queen-mother and the Cardinal permitted it. Louis, however, first had been smitten with her elder sister Olympia, and upon her marriage in 1657 with the Comte de Soissons, paid his attentions to Marie, who fell deeply in love with him. It, however, was purely a romantic attachment and innocent enough, owing, perhaps, to the fact of his strict surveillance, and, as Madame de Montespan hints, that there was another less innocent infatuation with Madame de Beauvais.¹

Hortensia says that as soon as the union with the Infanta of Spain was arranged, Louis himself was anxious for Marie, who had had very ambitious hopes, to be at a convenient distance. La Rochelle was fixed

¹ First Lady of the Bedchamber to the Queen-mother.



MARIE MANCINI, PRINCESS COLONNA



upon. The Cardinal assisted matters by proposing the marriage with the Prince Colonna, which she first rejected but was at length prevailed upon to accept in preference to the Duke of Lorraine. Before coming to this decision she had seen her royal lover again at Fontainebleau, but his manner had been so cold towards her that she felt it bitterly, and in her endeavours to forget her fondness she prayed that her younger sister would use her best endeavours to try and set her against her former lover by telling her all the ill things against him she could think of.

Marie's marriage, like that of Hortensia, being one of convenience, her gallantries afterwards became notorious. The new companionship with her fugitive sister was quite to her taste, and resulted in her following Hortensia's example and leaving her husband.

One evening the two adventuresses, during a temporary absence of the Constable of Naples, left the house under cover of darkness, wearing men's clothes beneath their own so that they might effect a speedy disguise when necessary. A coach was procured at Civita Vecchia, and by way of Nice and Turin they got to Lyons. Here they parted, as Marie's destination was Paris (for reasons best known to herself), where Hortense dared not show her face.

With an allowance of twenty-four thousand livres from King Louis—for the Duke Mazarin had taken possession of all her property, even to the plate and

furniture, which had been sold to the royal mistress, La Vallière—the Duchess settled in Chambéry. This was in 1672, when her “Memoirs,” written in her name by a gallant named César Vicard, who styled himself the Abbé de St. Real, come to an end. From that date, until 1675, the so-called “Abbé,” who was desperately in love with her, shared her seclusion and acted as her protector.

This brings us to the time when the invitation came from England, in which transaction her panegyrist, Saint-Evremond, then exiled there, had a considerable share. The dazzling beauty, then twenty-nine years of age, though she looked quite ten years younger, landed in Torbay, and, extravagant as ever, rode to London on horseback in male costume, accompanied by seven servants, a maid, and a black boy. Soon afterwards she took up her residence at St. James’s Palace with her friend and kinswoman, Mary of Modena, who had been married two years and was then only seventeen. The Duke of York afterwards purchased Lord Windsor’s house in the Park, and gave it for Hortense’s use during her sojourn in England.

In the meantime the Duchess of Cleveland, who had fallen into disfavour, in chagrin had made her departure for France. Her apartments in Whitehall were occupied by her daughter, the little Countess of Sussex, who soon became deeply attached to the witty and romantic Italian Duchess. The latter joined heart and soul in the young girl’s childish amusements, and

as her playmate became necessarily a constant visitor to the King's private apartments. As may be guessed, his merry majesty had no objection. Lord Sussex, however, did not look so complacently upon his young wife's friendship with the notorious adventuress. We get an interesting glimpse of things in a letter (among the Belvoir manuscripts) on November 2, 1676.

It was Lord Mayor's day, and the King, Queen, and Duke and Duchess of York formed part of the show. "I was in Cheapside," says Lady Chaworth, "and had the good luck to escape the squibs which was plentiful, especially directed to the balcone over against me where the Duchess of Mazarine, Lady Sussex, Prince of Monaco, and Portugall Ambassador, stood; one of them lighting such on Lady Sussex's forehead which forced her presently to put on a huge patch. They says her husband and she will part unless she leave the Court and be content to live to him in the country, he disliking her much converse with Madam Mazarine and the addresses she gets in that company." Again on December 25th, "Lady Sussex is not yet gone—she and Madam Mazarine have privately learnt to fence, and went downe into St. James's Parke the other day with drawne swords under their night gownes, which they drew out and made severall fine passes, much to the admiration of severall men that was lookers-on in the Parke."

A week or so after these events Lord Sussex took his wife into the country (Hurstmonceaux Castle, the

picturesque dismantled mansion in South Sussex, then intact and famous for its interior carvings and decorations), and she had to console herself by kissing her friend's miniature, which she carried with her for companionship.

Some months after this the Countess accompanied her mother on another trip to France, where she was put in a convent; but during a temporary absence of the latter, Ralph Montagu persuaded the daughter to remove her quarters to his residence, viz., the English Embassy, for which service, though Charles II. no doubt was at the bottom of the transaction, the mother got her revenge, and, by exposing some compromising letters, got him struck out of the Privy Council. Montagu, who, it will be remembered, was instrumental in bringing Hortense over to England to captivate the King, appears to have incurred his majesty's displeasure by paying her too much attention, for though, according to Count Gramont, he was not much to be feared on account of his personal attractions, his assiduity and wit made him a formidable rival. "Mr. Montagu goes no more to Madam Mazarin's," wrote the Dowager Countess of Sunderland in 1680. "The town says he is forbid; whether his love or his politics were too pressing I know not."¹ The lovely Italian's admirers, however, were legion, and among them, when she was actually a grandmother, her own nephew, the Chevalier de

¹ Henry Sidney's Diary, vol. ii. p. 11.



HORTENSE MANCINI, DUCHESS OF MAZARIN



Soissons, whose ardour was serious enough to make him cross swords with another juvenile lover, the Baron de Bainer, with the result that the latter was killed.

The introduction of Hortense into the English Court at first bid fair to disestablish the hitherto all-powerful French mistress. The very contrast between the doll-prettiness of Louise de Keroualle and this classic Roman beauty was sufficient with the capricious Charles to make him fall under the empire of the new duchess. Saint-Evremond, who looked upon her as little less than a deity, says her face was naturally grave, but her smile lightened it up with an air of sweetness. "Her complexion was soft-toned, yet warm and fresh. It was so harmonious that, although dark, she appeared to be of beautiful freshness. Her jet black hair rose in strong waves above her forehead, as if proud to shade and adorn so lovely a head. Even an artist could not determine the colour of her eyes, which had the sparkle of black, but the liveliness of grey and the sweetness of blue. They were neither languishing nor passionate in expression, as if," he says, "nature had maliciously designed them only to express love and veneration, while being susceptible to neither."

At first the Duchesses of Mazarin and Portsmouth were daggers drawn, but the latter was discreet enough to withdraw for a time, leaving her rival's position undisputed, only to reassert her supremacy as first

favourite a little later on. This she accomplished easily, and Mazarin, with her gold-liveried porters and valets, had to content herself with a secondary position at Whitehall and live on amicable terms with the reinstated mistress. She became an enthusiastic collector of curios, and to be first in the field, went to the Docks to inspect the vessels recently arrived from the East. At Newmarket she could be seen galloping over the Heath at five in the morning, and at night she held the bank at the basset table surrounded by a bevy of beautiful Frenchwomen, most of whom, like herself, did not take kindly to convent life.

It was generally thought that when Charles II. died Hortensia would have quitted England, or at least upon the abdication of his brother James, that she would have followed the fortunes of her cousin the exiled queen ; but this was far from her intention, even had her creditors permitted her to leave the country. The pension allowed by King Louis had ceased from the time of her leaving France, owing to the persuasion of her husband, who hoped that poverty would force her to return to him, who, by the way, was still travelling the country with his apostles.¹

The Queen of Beauty had by now assembled around her a small court of her own, and the basset table, over which she presided, at times proved profitable. In one night Nell Gwyn is said to have lost five thousand pounds to her. From St. James's the Duchess

¹ Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 7, App. pp. 316-318.

removed to the then fashionable centre, Kensington Square (which to this day preserves much of its old character), and from thence to Chelsea, where she rented a small house belonging to Lord Cheyne in Paradise Row.¹ This is now known as Queen's Road West, where the few surviving houses retain their panelled walls and powdering closets. Before the modern builder was let loose upon this historical ground, a portion of the garden of the Duchess's house could be seen retaining the quaint summer-house or music-room associated by tradition with some of the entertainments at which the beautiful Hortense presided, with old Saint-Evremond as her ever-ready business manager. He was loyal to her to the last, and his purse kept her out of many difficulties.

The Viscountess de Longueville, as a girl, remembered the little old man in his black coif, passing up Pall Mall daily in his sedan with some fresh butter from his own dairy for the Duchess's breakfast; indeed, most of the delicacies of her table were provided by her numerous admirers, for, her impecuniosity being well known and her creditors always on the alert, such gifts proved very acceptable. It was also a usual custom of those enjoying her hospitality at Chelsea to slip some money beneath their plates.

Some years prior to her death, to preserve her good looks she had adopted a rigid treatment in dieting, for

¹ The name is retained in "Paradise Walk," a particularly unprepossessing and squalid back street.

it was her ambition to die as she had lived, the greatest beauty in Europe. This and a partiality for wine probably hastened her end. After a brief illness she died in the year 1699.

No sooner the breath was out of her body than her creditors seized the corpse—a weird contrast to the days of affluence when gold was flung by handfuls out of the windows of the Palace Mazarin! The husband now came forward with his money, and the dead Duchess became his property. After a temporary interment at Notre Dame de Liesse, the remains of this remarkable woman found a resting-place in the tomb of her uncle the Cardinal.

Madame de Beauclair, a great friend of Hortense, had made a compact with her many years before to the effect that the one who died first should, if it were possible, appear to the other to prove the existence of a future state. The latter was dead and buried, but, nothing having occurred as a token, the survivor became sceptical, and in time forgot the agreement. On the day of her own death, however, Madame de Beauclair received a spectral visit, and was told the exact hour of her decease.

Memories of the Duchess of Mazarin cling to the site of the British Museum, where stood Montagu House, the finest residence in London in its time, burnt down in the year 1686. The great friend of Ralph, third Lord Montagu (created Duke in Queen Anne's reign), and his witty sister Anne (wife of Sir



BOUGHTON HOUSE



Daniel Harvey), the gay Italian was a constant visitor both here and at Boughton, the country house which the wealthy peer modelled after Versailles, with its gorgeous waterworks, one hundred acres of gardens, and ninety miles of avenues.

In writing to Lord Montagu soon after the Duchess of Mazarin's death, Saint-Evremond (whose letters, by the way, are a strange mixture of nauseating flattery and epicurean sentiments) refers to his lordship's truffles: "I could not forbear crying," he says, "when I thought of my eating them with the Duchess of Mazarin. I represented her to myself with all her charms: I thought I was at Boughton. The Nile and the Crocodiles appeared to me." This last remark, it may be specified, refers to the lake, not to the nocturnal effect of the truffles!

In passing through the old-world rooms of this fine mansion it requires no great stretch of the imagination to people them with the flesh and blood realities of the forms and faces of those silent seventeenth-century portraits upon the walls. But if the shade of Hortense materialised and encountered the painting attributed to Gascar, and traditionally named to be herself, she might at least be able to say whom the lady really represents.

A portrait of her by Mignard is at Hinchinbrooke, and one by Kneller at Althorp. At the Hôtel Brunst some twenty-five years ago were sold five full-length portraits by Lely of Cardinal Mazarin's handsome

nieces. They came originally from the Colonna Palace at Rome, and were as follows: Olympia Mancini, Comtesse de Soissons, Laura, Duchess de Vendôme, Marie, Princess Colonna, Hortensia, and Maria Anna, Duchess de Bouillon.¹

Of five granddaughters of the Duchess of Mazarin—the Duchesses de Mailly-Nesles, de Vintimille, de Lauraguis, de Flavacount, and de la Toumelle—four made themselves conspicuous in the eighteenth century by carrying on the traditions of the amours of the beautiful adventuress. Consecutively each of these ladies became the mistress of King Louis XV.²

The eldest of the Duchess of Mazarin's daughters was abducted from the Convent St. Marie of Chaillot by the Marquis de Richelieu, who afterwards married her. But connubial bliss was as unsuited to her flighty temperament as it was to her mother's. She also was placed in a nunnery, but promptly managed to climb a wall and get away.

¹ The Cardinal had two more handsome nieces, daughters of his sister Margaret, who married Count Hieronimo Martinozzi de Fano, viz., Anna Martinozzi, who married Armand, Prince de Conti, and Laura Martinozzi, who married Alphonso d'Este, third Duke of Modena, the mother of Mary Beatrice d'Este, James II.'s second wife.

² Forneron's "Louise de Keroualle."





HENRIETTA, DUCHESS OF ORLEANS

HENRIETTA, DUCHESS OF ORLEANS

THE portrait of the King's favourite sister is missing from the series of portraits of the beauties of Charles II.'s Court, painted at the Duchess of York's suggestion by Sir Peter Lely, for the Queen's bedroom at Windsor, and now in William III.'s state bedroom at Hampton Court. It is very possible that the Court painter's picture, representing her as the goddess Pallas Athenè, now at Buckingham Palace, formed one of the original eleven, and as she was the only royal personage in the series, was for that reason separated from its companions. In this one, and in that by the same artist, which was given by her royal brother Charles to Exeter, in commemoration of her birth in that city, and indeed in most of her portraits, one recognises both the Stuart nose and her likeness to her mother. Her features have not the classic moulding of those of "la belle Stuart" and other famous beauties, but the attractiveness of the face lies rather in the animation and sweetness of expression, blended with dignity.

At the age of eighteen Henrietta is thus described

by Madame de Brégis : " Her air is as noble as her birth, her hair is of a bright chestnut hue, and her complexion rivals that of the gayest flowers. The snowy whiteness of her skin betrays the lilies from which she sprang. Her eyes are blue and brilliant, her lips ruddy, her throat beautiful, her arms and hands well made. Her charms show that she was born on a throne and is destined to return there. Her wit is lively and agreeable. She is admired in her serious moments, and beloved in her most ordinary ones. She is gentle and obliging, and her kindness of heart will not allow her to laugh at others, as cleverly as she could, if she chose. She spends most of her time in learning all that can make a princess perfect, and devotes her spare moments to the most varied accomplishments. She dances with incomparable grace, she sings like an angel, and the spinet is never so well played as by her fair hands. All this makes the young Cleopatra the most amiable princess in the world, and if Fortune once unties the fold that wraps her eyes, to gaze upon her, she will not refuse to give her the greatest of earth's glories, for she deserves them well."

The writer of this eulogy might have added, that with all her grace and winning ways, the Princess inherited not only the intriguing spirit of her mother, but was haughty, and by no means averse to admiration, indeed somewhat too susceptible. It must be remembered, however, that being reared abroad, she was practically a French woman in all her tastes and sym-

pathies, and from girlhood had been surrounded by adulation. Had not death overtaken her before she was thirty, and had she lived as long as her mother, it is possible the less pleasing traits of her character would have been developed, but as it is, her tragic fate, like that of her ancestress, Mary, Queen of Scots, has surrounded her with a halo of romance, so that now we only have sympathy for her shortcomings. Still, no one can forget the fact that it was she who was entrusted with that deplorable negotiation between Louis XIV. and Charles II., which secured the subjection of the English nation, and humiliated her own brother in the eyes of the world.

Henrietta was born on June 16, 1644, at Bedford House, Exeter,¹ two months after the Queen had been persuaded to leave her husband and look after her own safety. When the "happy" event occurred, Essex was advancing against the city, and the unfortunate mother when her baby was only a fortnight old was forced to leave it in the charge of Anne Villiers, Lady Dalkeith, better known as Countess of Morton (a famous beauty of her day, daughter of the first Duke of Buckingham's half-brother, Sir Edward Villiers), and the governor of the city, Sir John Berkeley,² and effect her escape, as Essex by no means felt disposed to allow her extenuating circumstances.

She and her three companions, a lady-in-waiting, her

¹ "Bedford Circus" occupies its site.

² See his narrative, "Memoirs of the Martyr King."

physician, and her confessor, managed to get out of the city in disguise, but before they could pass the enemy's outposts, had to conceal themselves in a miserable hut some three miles outside Exeter. Jermyn, whom the Queen afterwards is said to have privately married, managed to join the party, and after a few days' sojourn at Pendennis Castle, she embarked in a Dutch vessel for France, landing at Chastel, near Brest, after a very narrow escape of being sunk by one of the Parliament cruisers.

On July 21st the royal babe was baptized in the Cathedral, and five days later Essex had to fall back before the troops of the King and Prince of Wales. In the following summer the little Princess again was shut up in the city. The garrison held out bravely, but in April, 1646, was forced to surrender, Sir John Berkeley having first stipulated that his charge should be well cared for. Lady Dalkeith consequently had to carry the little Princess to Oatlands Palace, and after a sojourn of three months she was ordered to deliver her into the care of the Countess of Northumberland at St. James's Palace, where the young Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Gloucester then were.

The nurse, seeing no way out of the difficulty, for she had sworn not to part with her charge, managed, with the assistance of three loyal servants, to disguise herself as a tramp and the Princess in rags, and get away without observation. In this way they walked to Dover, Sir John Berkeley following and keeping a



ANNE VILLIERS, COUNTESS OF MORTON



watchful eye in case of danger ; but fortunately Lady Dalkeith's only anxiety was in the little lady, who objected to be called " Pierre," telling everybody what her real name was, and that her own clothes were fine ones, and not the rags she had been dressed in.

The joy of the Queen and the ovation the heroic nurse received upon her arrival at Saint-Germain may well be imagined.¹ The little girl was petted and fondled by every one, and as she grew, her liveliness, intelligence, and prettiness made her a universal favourite. The little companion soothed the misfortunes of the poor Queen, and her early experience of hardships only tended to sweeten her disposition. But gradually the clouds of adversity rolled away, and she was allowed to participate in the amusements of her cousins, of the youthful King Louis and his brother, and their beautiful but conceited young cousin, Mademoiselle de Montpensier. The French monarch posing in his favourite character of Apollo in the masquerades at Court, cast a halo of romance around his Majesty, and Cardinal Mazarin's lovely nieces and other beauties as supernumeraries, only tended to make him more important. The Princess Henrietta's first appearance as Erato made a great impression both on herself and on the audience, and it was whispered abroad that more things were unlikely than an alliance with the poverty-stricken English

¹ Lady Morton returned to England in 1651, when she became widow. She died in 1654.

Court. But Louis at this time was too engrossed with the superior charms of Olympia Mancini, and as his admiration reverted from her to her sister Marie, whom the Cardinal had to send away to make place for the Infanta Marie Thérèse, the King never took his young cousin, Henrietta, into serious consideration.

On the other hand, his brother Philippe became deeply infatuated with his former playmate, but not until her brother had been restored to the English throne and he had become Duke of Orleans did he make a formal declaration which was satisfactory alike to the two Queen-mothers. Monsieur was handsome, but if anything more vain and fond of display than his brother. He is said to have devoted more time to the mirror than most of the fashionable beauties of the day. When he got married the English coat-of-arms was lavishly displayed everywhere. Like the Grand Monarque, he was very touchy about his small stature. Madame de Montespan says that upon one occasion he wished to outdo his brother by having two inches placed upon the heels of his shoes, but the King having heard of it was equal to the occasion, by having his own shoes heightened proportionately, so that when they stood side by side, Monsieur was mortified to find himself comparatively as short as before.

In the autumn previous to her marriage, Henrietta and her mother made a short visit to London, arriving by way of Lambeth, and so privately that even Pepys failed to get a glimpse of them. However, when he

saw them at Whitehall some three months afterwards, the former did not come up to his expectations. He was a severe critic in feminine fashions, and he objected strongly to "her hair frized short up to her ears," whereas his wife, for whom he had purchased a new neckerchief for the occasion on their way up from the city, looked pretty in comparison. The Queen-mother he describes as a little, plain, very ordinary-looking old woman.¹ Madame de Motteville is far more eulogistic. By her account about this time the Princess was tall and graceful, had soft and sparkling eyes, rosy lips, perfect teeth, and brilliant complexion, although her face was too long and her body too thin. She, as well as everybody else, even including her proud cousin Montpensier, was struck most by her charming manners and lovable nature. A year had made her much more womanly, for Reresby gives us a pretty sketch of Henrietta in the previous November, when he visited the Palais Royal. "The young Princess, then aged about fifteen years," he says, "used me with all the civil freedom that might be, made me dance with her, played on the harpsichord to me in her Highness's chamber, suffered me to attend upon her when she walked in the garden with the rest of her retinue, and sometimes to toss her in a swing made of a cable which she sat upon, tied between two trees, and, in fine, suffered me to be present at most of her innocent diversions."²

¹ Pepys' Diary, November 22, 1660.

² "Memoirs of Sir John Reresby," 1875 ed. pp. 42, 43.

The death of the young Duke of Gloucester, followed so soon after by that of the Princess Royal, saddened the trip to England, and on her return journey Henrietta fell ill, and had to remain for a time at Portsmouth; however, by January 25, she was sufficiently strong again to continue her journey. On the last day of March the marriage with the Duke of Orleans was solemnised in the chapel of the Palais Royal, and a few days after the happy couple took up their residence in the Palace of the Tuileries, which thenceforward became the fashionable centre, for the King seemed to find more pleasure in her company than in that of his dull and delicate young wife.

When the King and Queen adjourned the Court to Fontainebleau the Duchess of Orleans was a necessity there, as more and more Louis found pleasure in his sister-in-law's accomplishments and high spirits. And on her side the gifts of her ambitious brother-in-law as compared with the effeminacy of her husband only made his company the more agreeable. The love of romance common to both of them tended to bind their sympathies, and the picturesque surroundings of the château gave every opportunity of fostering tender feelings no matter how innocent they may have been. Fêtes and masques and theatrical pageantry of every description passed away the time in a kind of dreamy existence. The natural beauty of the forest was turned into fairyland, and the imagination was led into an ideal world. It would perhaps be uncharitable to compare



LOUIS XIV



these æsthetic pleasures to those aimed at by poor Ludwig II. of Bavaria, but there is something strangely suggestive of the similarity in the tastes of these two monarchs. So inseparable became Louis and his sister-in-law that scandal-mongers began to tattle. Monsieur and the young Queen had reasonable cause to be jealous, and when Henrietta was awakened to the fact of what ill-constructions might be made of her thoughtless behaviour she saw how necessary it was not to give occasion for such surmises. At this juncture her lively young maid of honour, La Vallière, attracted the King's notice, and as his ardour increased in that direction so his attentions to his sister-in-law diminished. But at the same time the attentions of the handsome Comte de Guiche, a nephew of the amorous chevalier, awakened in Monsieur a new flame of jealousy, and in the end became an open scandal. The rashness of the Comte led him to extravagant lengths. He followed her to Saint-Germain, Saint-Cloud, or any of the royal residences where she might be, and serenaded her in true Romeo style beneath her balcony. He donned the disguise of a fortune-teller to obtain a few words with her, and on one occasion borrowed a suit of the La Vallière livery that he might pass as her page and discourse with her at the side of her sedan. He, however, was watched in a secret assignation which Henrietta had granted. The Duke of Orleans complained to the King, and De Guiche was commanded to absent himself from Court for a couple of years. To

add to the romance of this platonic love affair, when an exile in Poland, fighting against the Russians, a miniature of Henrietta which he wore against his heart upon one occasion saved his life, a bullet shattering the case in which it was contained. Some years afterwards when he was inconsolable at the Princess's premature death this miniature prevented him from entering a life of seclusion. He had given way to despondency after a visit to her tomb in the Abbey Church of St. Denis, and had presented himself at La Trappe, but when the Abbé de Rancé wished to destroy the picture before his eyes, he was so indignant that he gave up his project.

Among other of Henrietta's admirers were the Prince de Marsillac and the Marquis de Vardes; the latter a dangerous intriguer who had done his best to compromise the name of the Comtesse de Soissons. In his jealousy of De Guiche he had circulated mischievous reports which had resulted in the Count's dismissal, but when the Princess discovered his treachery she appealed to the King who sent him into banishment for a considerable number of years, the punishment being attributable mainly to Vardes denouncing Louis's own amours with La Vallière, whom, it may be mentioned, had been offered to the Marquis with a marriage portion of a million livres, but which offer had been respectfully declined as his attentions just then were fully occupied by Olympia Mancini.

Among other ladies who had been captivated with the good looks and endearing manners of this Don

Juan were two other famous beauties—the Princess de Conti and the witty and notorious Ninon de L'Enclos, who had enslaved masculine hearts in the previous reign and died in the eighteenth century, still beautiful at the age of ninety!

As Henrietta became more discreet in her romantic attachments so she regained the esteem and popularity which in some measure she had lost. Nobody can deny that she was a coquette, but that is the worst that her enemies could say of her. Her husband's second wife gives a just verdict when she says that the Princess had more misfortunes than faults. "She had to do," she says, "with wicked people about whose conduct I could tell a great deal if I chose. Madame was very young, beautiful, agreeable, full of grace and charm. From the time of her marriage, she was surrounded by the greatest coquettes and most intriguing women in the world, who were the mistresses of her enemies. I think people have been very unjust to her."¹

But one of Madame's most dangerous enemies was a man—the Chevalier de Lorraine, her husband's confidant and evil genius; an insinuating villain, to whose poisonous fabrications Monsieur ever had a ready ear. The thoughtless flirtations of Henrietta had justly made her husband jealous, although his was a nature not to take to heart anything very deeply, and this Iago came upon the scene just in time to make the most of anything that sounded in the least incriminating, no

¹ "Madame," by Julia Cartwright, p. 185.

matter from what source it originated. Yet he, of all men, was the last to call attention to such things, for he had brought about the disgrace of one of the maids of honour of his noble patron's wife, Mademoiselle de Fiennes, who for her offence was turned out of doors by the Duke, while his libertine friend was given luxurious apartments in the Palais Royal, priding himself on the fact that he had abandoned his mistress that he might continue in the good graces of the King's brother.

Indignant as the Princess had been at her maid's dismissal and the cause of it, she not only had to suffer the indignity of living under the same roof as this unscrupulous scoundrel, but such ascendancy had he gained over her effeminate husband that he governed him in everything and practically was master of the household, and when she complained the only satisfaction she obtained was to be removed to her more remote dwelling of Villers-Cotterets, there to have the same detested companionship as before. The recent arrival of the handsome Duke of Monmouth in France with a letter from Charles II., asking his sister to look after him, had given the Chevalier opportunities of being revenged upon his hostess. "The universal terror of lovers and husbands," as Count Gramont describes Monmouth about this time, was certainly at an age when excuses might be found for his promiscuous amours. Having run wild with Chesterfield, Mandeville, and many other fashionable rakes, Charles thought a change would be beneficial. "I therefore put him



HENRIETTA,
DUCHESS OF ORLEANS



NINON DE LENCLOS



MARIA LOUISA D'ORLEANS,
QUEEN OF SPAIN



into your hands," he wrote to his sister (on January 14, 1668), "to be directed by you in all things, and pray use that authority over him as you ought to do in kindnesse to me." What "authority" a fascinating aunt, not yet twenty-four, would have over a spoiled and petted youth of eighteen who had turned the heads of all the pretty ladies at Whitehall, was, to say the least of it, doubtful, and it is only natural that they found each other's company mutually agreeable. The young Duke's proficiency in dancing, skating, and athletics won him easy popularity at the Palais Royal, and the fêtes and balls given in his honour presented opportunities for Henrietta's attentions to her handsome nephew to be talked about. As may be guessed, her husband's evil genius made the most of it. Reports reached Monsieur's ears that Madame de Montespan's sister was conducting a clandestine intrigue between his wife and the gay young visitor. The Duke of Orleans's jealousy was, however, for a time appeased by Monmouth's return to England, but it revived when two years afterwards Henrietta landed at Dover, on May 16, 1670, to conduct the nefarious treaty by which her brother became a pensioner of France. Monmouth was among the grandees who had come to welcome her, and was in the thick of all the festivities, and his marked attentions to his aunt¹ were duly carried to the absent husband who had for some time past been deprived of his friend's companionship, owing to his own intolerance

¹ Reresby's Memoirs, 1875 ed. p. 82.

and to Louis XIV.'s intercession on his sister-in-law's behalf. The favourite had become so insufferable that the King had ordered his arrest, which led to a rupture between the royal brothers. The Duke raised strong objections to his wife's visit to England, and at length only consented under the promise that she should not return to Whitehall.

A month before the important trip to England Henrietta wrote to Madame de Saint-Chaumont about her unfortunate surroundings. The Duke, she said, "consents to my journey with a very bad grace. At present his chief friends are M. de Marsan, the Marquis de Villeroy, and the Chevalier de Beuvron. The Marquis d'Effiat is the only one of the troop who is perhaps a little less of a rogue, but he is not clever enough to manage Monsieur, and the three others do all they can to make me miserable until the Chevalier returns. Although Monsieur is somewhat softened he still tells me there is only one way in which I can show my love for him. Such a remedy, you know, would be followed by certain death! Besides, the King has pledged his word that the Chevalier shall not return for eight years, by which time it is to be hoped Monsieur will either be cured of his passion, or else enlightened as to his favourite's true character. He may then see what faults this man has made him commit, and live to hate him as much as once he loved him. This is my only hope, although, even then, I may still be unhappy. Monsieur's jealous nature and his constant fear that I

should be loved and esteemed will always be the cause of trouble, and the King does not make people happy, even when he means to treat them well. We see how even his mistresses have to suffer three or four rebuffs a week. What then must his friends expect?"¹

The important political treaty being signed, and the prettiness of the Princess's Maid of Honour, Louise de Keroualle, having made the required impression upon "the merry monarch," he bid his favourite sister a fond adieu, and she returned to the château of Saint-Germain, moving from thence to Saint-Cloud on June 24th. But the old troubles were renewed as soon as the Duke and she were re-united. The sunshine from the recent expedition was soon dispelled, leaving the prospect more gloomy than ever, Monsieur still harping on the old trouble, his friend's exile. "Since my return," she wrote to her former correspondent, "the King here has been very good to me, but as for Monsieur, nothing can equal his bitterness and anxiety to find fault. He does me the honour to say that I am all-powerful and can do everything that I like, and so, if I do not bring back the Chevalier, it is because I do not wish to please him."

The Princess, who had been in ill-health for some time past, on June 28th, contrary to the doctor's advice, bathed in the Seine, and afterwards complained of sharp pains in her side. On the following day they recurred with increased violence after she had drunk some iced

¹ "Madame," by Julia Cartwright, p. 324.

chicory water that she had asked^d for after dinner. The doctors treated her for colic, but the agony grew worse, and she declared that she had been poisoned. An emetic was administered, and she was bled, but no relief resulted. Her limbs grew numb, and the doctors who had treated the symptoms only lightly, were at last forced to admit that she was dying. News of the catastrophe travelled rapidly, and the death chamber saw the grief-stricken faces of the greatest in the land, including the King and Queen, Monsieur, Mademoiselle, Turenne, the Prince de Condé, Maréchal de Gramont, Treville, Ralph Montagu, the mistresses La Vallière and Montespan, her once rival the Countess of Soissons, Madame de la Fayette, &c.

The poor Princess having endured unutterable pain for some eleven hours, died at three o'clock on the morning of June 30, 1670. Though it was universally believed that Henrietta had been poisoned, at the post mortem examination the doctors gave their decision that death had resulted from cholera-morbus, there being no traces of poison to be found. But for all that Charles II. for long afterwards had his suspicions of foul play, and Prince Rupert and Buckingham shared the same opinion. Madame de Montespan declared that poison was found in the stomach, and that it had eaten into three separate places, but for form's sake the physicians made lying depositions. The Chevalier de Lorraine, she says, before he was removed from Monsieur's household, instructed a kitchen official to

rub poison on a silver goblet that the Princess used. "I hastened to Saint-Cloud directly news reached me of her illness," she says. "To my horror I saw the sudden change which had come over her countenance: her horrible agony drew tears from the most callous, and approaching her I kissed her hand, in spite of her confessor, who sought to constrain her to be silent. She then repeatedly told me that she was dying from the effects of poison."¹

The Duke's second wife gives much the same version. Writing in 1716, she says, "It is quite true that poor Madame was poisoned, but without Monsieur's knowledge. To say the truth, he was incapable of such a crime. When these wretches conferred together as to how they should poison poor Madame, they discussed whether they should tell Monsieur, but Lorraine said, 'No, for he would never be able to hold his tongue, and even if he kept silence for a year he would tell the King in the end, and we might all be hanged ten years afterwards.' They persuaded Monsieur that the Dutch had poisoned her in a cup of chocolate. The real truth is that D'Effiat rubbed the poison on a cup belonging to Madame, as a valet in her service himself told me, on that Sunday morning, while Monsieur and Madame were at mass. As soon as Madame had drunk the chicory water out of that cup she cried out 'I am poisoned!' Others drank of the same water, but *not out of that cup*. The story is old and reads like

¹ "Memoirs of Madame de Montespan," pp. 93, 94.

a page of romance, but it is nevertheless true." ¹ Saint-Simon says that the Duke's second wife was told by King Louis himself that on the day Henrietta had died he had ordered the arrest of one Simon, his brother's chef at Saint-Cloud, who admitted that the poison had been obtained from the Chevalier by D'Effiat and Beuvron, but declared that Monsieur had not been let into the plot.²

The English Ambassador, Ralph Montagu, shared the same opinion of the Chevalier de Lorraine's guilt. But for all these sensational stories, Villot, the King's physician, had always expected that Henrietta would die suddenly, and even wondered that her constitution had held out so long. As the gifted writer, Julia Cartwright, truly says in her excellent monograph, it is very doubtful that any poison administered in the way it was said to have been, would have instantly produced violent pains, pains in the side which Henrietta had suffered from the previous day; besides, many drank from the same cup with not the slightest ill effect. The actual cause of her death must therefore be attributed to peritonitis, resulting from a chill she had contracted while bathing.³

Henrietta had three children, Philip, Duc de Valois, born in 1664, who died two years later; Maria Louisa, born in 1662, who married Charles II. of Spain, and

¹ Letters of Charlotte, the Princess Palatine.

² Memoirs of Saint-Simon.

³ "Madame," by Julia Cartwright, pp. 370, 371.



HENRIETTA, DUCHESS OF ORLEANS, AND HER DAUGHTERS



died in 1689 ; and Anna Maria (the great-grandmother of Louis XVI.), born 1669 and died 1728. By her husband, Victor II., Duke of Savoy and King of Sardinia, this second daughter had four children, of whom the fourth succeeded to the throne. His son, Victor III., King of Sardinia, married the daughter of Philip V. of Spain, and had two sons. Charles Emanuel IV. of Sardinia, who, on the death of Henry, Cardinal York (King James II.'s grandson and Prince Charles Edward's brother) in 1807, was looked upon as the next claimant to the English throne. His brother Victor Emanuel I., King of Sardinia, succeeded him, and by his wife, Marie Theresa, daughter of Ferdinand V. of Modena, had one son and six daughters, the eldest of whom (termed Mary III. by the Jacobites) died in 1840. By her husband Francis IV., Duke of Modena, she had two sons and two daughters, and the direct line of the Stuarts from Princess Henrietta of England, devolved upon the daughter of the second son Ferdinand Victor and his wife Elizabeth, daughter of the Archduke Joseph of Austria : viz., Mary Theresa Henrietta Dorothea, Princess of Bavaria (the present representative of the Royal Houses of Plantagenet, Tudor, and Stuart, who is termed by the Jacobites Mary IV. of Great Britain). Had not the Act of Settlement, by a majority of one, secured the succession to the Protestant heirs of Sophia, Electress Dowager of Hanover, the daughter of the Queen of Bohemia, and granddaughter of James I., upon the direct male line

of the Stuarts failing in 1807, Charles Emanuel IV. of Sardinia, Princess Henrietta's great-great-grandson (who died in 1819), would have been by right King of England.





ELIZABETH WRIOTHESLEY, COUNTESS OF NORTHUMBERLAND

THE DUCHESS OF SOMERSET

THE last beauty of Charles II.'s reign painted by Sir Peter Lely was the Duchess of Somerset. The picture, however, was never completed, at least by him, for he was struck down by apoplexy and died while engaged upon the work. It would be interesting to know if it was finished afterwards by the Court painter's younger rival, Kneller, of whom he was not a little jealous; indeed, the French writer Descamps rather foolishly asserts that Lely's death was hastened by Kneller's success.

In 1680, when the great artist died, his sitter was not yet a Duchess, but Countess of Ogle. She was a famous beauty, like her mother, who had sat also to Lely for one of the original set of "The Windsor Beauties." She was the youngest daughter of Thomas, fourth Earl of Southampton¹ (and the half-sister of Rachel, Lady Russell), who in 1662 married Joscelyn, the eleventh and last Earl of Northumberland (of the Percy family). She became a widow at the age of

¹ Lady Elizabeth Wriothesley.

twenty-three, and married, three years afterwards, Ralph, third Lord Montagu,¹ who shortly before had figured, when Ambassador in Paris, as one of Lady Castlemaine's admirers.²

One of the sons of the last-mentioned lady's rival, at the age of seven, was proposed by his royal sire as a suitable match for the juvenile heiress of twelve, whose enormous fortune made her a most enviable acquisition. But the son of the French mistress, although a juvenile Duke,³ was rejected in favour of a son of the second Duke of Newcastle, Henry Cavendish, Earl of Ogle, a puny youth, described by the future bride's great aunt, the Dowager Countess of Sunderland, as "the saddest creature of all kinds that could have been found fit to be named for any Lady Percy—as ugly as anything young can be."⁴

The little heiress's grandmother, the widowed Dowager Countess of Northumberland (daughter of the second Earl of Suffolk), who had brought her up, was a shrewd woman of business, and a diplomatic match-maker, and after she had disposed of her granddaughter's hand thus to her own satisfaction she saw that the weighty name of Percy predominated over that of Cavendish in the same way that her daughter,

¹ Created Duke of Montagu in Queen Anne's reign.

² He was one of the four noblemen who were permitted to follow Charles I. to the grave. See "Memoirs of the Martyr King."

³ Duke of Richmond, son of the Duchess of Portsmouth.

⁴ Diary of Henry Sidney, vol. i. p. 302.



[JOSCELYN PERCY, EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND

Har. 700-102



when she remarried, retained the title of Northumberland.

The old plotting Countess had to renew her schemes very shortly, for the sickly boy-husband of her granddaughter, after a year of unconsummated wedded bliss, died leaving a wealthy and beautiful widow of the tender age of thirteen.

The second husband selected for the juvenile heiress was very distasteful to her, notwithstanding his riches, for Tom Thynne, better known as "Tom of Ten Thousand," according to Rochester, was not a brilliant match, taking the man apart from his estate. He was a rake like his boon companion, Monmouth, who during his quasi-royal progresses in the western counties was entertained in princely style at Thynne's mansion of Longleat.¹ However, the match was arranged in September, 1681, notwithstanding the little widow's objections.

A letter written by Charles Bertie to his niece, the Countess of Rutland, reveals the unfortunate state of affairs in this new alliance: "I must tell you for news," he says, "that our great fortune, my Lady Ogle, took an opportunity yesterday as she was at the Old Exchange to withdraw herself, and immediately my old Lady Northumberland came in search after her, and some say Mr. Thynne. The reason given for this resolution is the uncomfortable prospect shee pretends to have of ever living happy with Tom Thynne, as

¹ See "King Monmouth."

report tells us, and some add that shee has betaken herself to my Lord Duke Albemarle's protection. Some say the contract shee lately signed rises in her stomach, and that shee shows all manner of aversion to the match with Thynne. Wee must bee allowed a little more time to learn the reason of this so surprising an action, but I write the report of the town and leave your ladyship to descant thereupon."¹ Fuller details came to hand from another correspondent three days later, but before quoting them we must glance for a moment at Mr. Evelyn, who on the same day, after dining with the Earl of Essex, is discussing the same topic in his lordship's study. The heroine of the story was the Countess of Essex's niece, and the diarist's host was much scandalised by the report which had got about that he had been privy to the marriage. Producing a letter from Tom Thynne, excusing himself for not having previously communicated his marriage, the Earl described how the young Lady Ogle had been betrayed for money by her grandmother, and Colonel Bret: how the Duke of Monmouth had favoured the match, but he had been opposed to it, as the Earl of Kingston, or Lord Cranbourne, or indeed the highest in the land might aspire to such a union.

Now for Chaloner Chute's letter, which is penned more in the style of comedy than tragedy:—

“Since words are now out of fashion, I send you

¹ Belvoir MSS. The letter is dated November 10, 1681.

here the comical part of my last as I heard it from a person very well acquainted with the whole. To do it, I must first tell you how matters stood with my Lady O[gle] when Mr. T[hynne] first began his addresses to her, and consequently the rivals he had at that time to deale withall. The chiefest of them were the Duke of S[omers]et, the Earle of North[umberlan]d, and the Earl of K[ings]ton. The present fortune which she had was but 4,000*l.* per annum, and that was enough to overcome the Duke's pretentions, for until she come of age she was to have no more, and that was looked upon as too inconsiderable to maintaine them boath as they would be obliged to live. Against the Earl of N[orthumberlan]d she was fully resolved as being a bastard, and her granmother confirmed hir in that oppinion by coating severall places of Scripture she found to that purpose; and for the Earl of K[ings]ton her former Lord had one night tould her somewhat of him that made her slight the greatest offers he could make. Mr. T[hynne] was at Richmond when these things were considered, and had there the advantage almost every day of seeing the Lady O[gle] at the Lady K. Br[e]t's and playing at cards, cross purposes, or questions and commands with her. He soon found out that none of the exceptions she had taken to the other three could be justly made to him, but still he feared she had one more considerable against him that he was no Lord, which they say he strangely feared would prouve invincible; but in a very short

time he found so good an effect of whispering at cross purposes with her that he did not altogether dispare of seeing her in a short time look as favourably on him as he had already won the gran[dmother]er and Mr. Br[e]t to do, upon which he made these propositions to them, that she should have 3,000*l.* a year out of her own estate for pinn money and 2,000*l.* a year jointure out of his—by Act of Parliament he can make but 1,500, but by means of some leases he has made her 500 more out of his father's estate. These propositions were accepted, and a contract thereupon was made and signed by them boath, that she should marry none but him, and he should marry none but her. My Lady O[gle] now desired that out of decency the rest might be deffered until her year of widdowhood was out, and Mr. T[hynne] was persuaded to resolve on leaving her that things might be the more privately carried on. This made him very melancolly. She perceived the cause of it, and after some discourse of his fear that he was not sure enough of so great a happyness, she plainly tould him she could deny him nothing, and in short bid him send for his own parson. He immediately sent to Longleet for him. Upon so good an occasion the parson travelled night and day, and in the presence of Mr. B[re]t who gave her, the Lady B[re]t and her daughter, the Lady Orory, and two or three more, without any swoundings as was pretended, they were marryed at Sion. The gran[dmother] was not in the same room with them, that she might jesuitically



ELIZABETH WRIOTHESLEY, COUNTESS OF NORTHUMBERLAND



or fanatically deny several things that would be asked her." ¹

Before the marriage had been consummated, the little heroine of romance had fled from Tom of Ten Thousand, leaving him, as expressed in another Belvoir letter, with no other passion for the sex than that of indignation.

Henry Sidney, better known as "the handsome Sidney," was instrumental in her flight. He records in his diary that about this time his hands were full of the business about my Lady Ogle. "On the seventh of November I went with her on board the yacht and conducted her below Gravesend, and came back and told my story to the King, who was very well pleased." At Gravesend Lady Temple took charge of the young bride and carried her over to Holland. Her friends meanwhile used their best endeavours to annul the marriage, on the grounds that Thynne had previously been united to a Miss Trevor.

This lady some four years before had quitted the Court somewhat suddenly, the cause being the same that induced the Maids of Honour to retire occasionally into seclusion. In this case Thynne was the cause of the trouble, but Lady Trevor tried to rectify matters by informing the Duchess of York that her daughter absented herself at Thynne's desire, who intended to marry her. This, however, he denied, saying that he had no knowledge either of her disgrace or of her whereabouts, whereupon a challenge came from the

¹ Belvoir MSS., November 15, 1681.

lady's brother, and a duel was fought in the modern French style, for honour was avenged without either party being hurt.¹

As a marriage contract could not be produced at the time, far less was it possible for it to be forthcoming when Lady Ogle's friends wished to disprove Thynne's claim upon Northumberland House² or the rest of her ladyship's property. Rumours were already afloat that she would have to return to England and grace the palatial house of Longleat as its mistress, for although sumptuous preparations had been made for her honeymoon, she had not yet entered its door. But at this juncture a new aspirant for the hand of the wealthy heiress appeared upon the scene, Count Coningsmark, a handsome but unprincipled adventurer, who had become infatuated with the young beauty, and determined to win her favours at any cost. At this time, though only twenty-two years of age, the Count was an accomplished *roué* and gambler. He was born in Dresden, and had served in the army in France and Italy before his fascinating appearance and manners won him favour in the English Court, where his success with the ladies was as great as his luck at the basset table. But he was not quite so successful with Lady Ogle as to overcome all obstacles at once.

¹ Belvoir MSS., Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 12, App. pt. ii. pp. 49, 50.

² The old house at Charing Cross which was pulled down in 1873.

According to Sir John Reresby's account, Coningsmark, who was in England at the time, had paid his addresses to the much-sought-for widow when the old Countess of Northumberland was arranging the match with Thynne. His handsome face and figure, with his remarkably long fair hair, was calculated to create an impression in a heart as yet not seriously assailed.

It would be interesting to know what schemes were planned on his side in this age of abducting heiresses, but as his rival won the day he probably was implicated in the flight of the new-made bride, for when she arrived at the Hague he was not far away, arranging desperate measures of how to get rid of the husband. At the time it was certainly supposed that Lady Ogle encouraged the Count's addresses, and was indeed privy to the murderous designs which culminated in the tragedy that took place early in the following year; on the other hand, Thynne's assassination by some was attributed to revenge for Miss Trevor's seduction, which, says Walpole, was induced by the Duke of Monmouth as that lady had discovered an amour in which he was engaged. Be this as it may, the Count was discreet enough to keep in the background, while a friend, one Captain Vratz, took upon himself to settle the affair. This desperado (who upon one occasion had relieved the King of Poland of his diamonds), although he had two accomplices, afterwards declared that it was his intention to engage Thynne in single combat had not

his companion, Boroski the Pole, forestalled him by firing his blunderbuss. The third assassin was a Swedish soldier named Stern.

The villainous Count, having perfected his plans, came over to England in disguise early in February, giving the lame reason for so doing when he was afterwards examined before the King that he came over to take physic, and was unwilling to discover himself until he was cured! His accomplices, who had arrived some time before, made their headquarters at the "Two Golden Balls," in Leicester Square, and on the evening of Sunday, February 12th, waylaid Thynne's coach in Pall Mall. The wealthy Squire of Longleat had been taking a drive round Hyde Park with his friend the Duke of Monmouth, who had alighted at Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, when the three assassins rode up, one of whom shot Thynne in the stomach. Reresby gives a realistic account of the affair:—

"At eleven o'clock the same night" (Feb. 12th), he says, "as I was going into bed, Mr. Thynne's gentleman came to me to grant a hue and cry, and soon after the Duke of Monmouth's page, to desire me to come to his master at Mr. Thynne's lodging, sending his coach to fetch me. I found him surrounded with several gentlemen and lords, friends to Mr. Thynne, and Mr. Thynne mortally wounded by five bullets which had entered his belly and side, shot from a blunderbuss. I granted immediately several warrants to search for persons suspected to be privy to the

design and that might give some intelligence of the parties that had acted that murder. At the last, by intelligence from a chairman that had the same afternoon conveyed one of the ruffians from his lodging in Westminster to take horse at the 'Black Bull,' and by a woman that used to visit that gentleman, the constables found out his lodging in Westminster, and there took his man, a Swede, who, being brought before me, at last confessed that he served a gentleman, a German captain, who had told him that he had a quarrel with Mr. Thynne, and had often appointed him to watch his coach as he passed by; and particularly that day, so soon as the captain did know the coach was gone by, he had booted himself, and with two others—a Swedish lieutenant and a Polander—gone, as he supposed, in quest of Mr. Thynne on horseback. By this servant I also understood that possibly the captain and his two friends might be found; and after having searched several houses with the Duke of Monmouth, Lord Mordaunt, and others, as he directed us, till six o'clock in the morning, having been in chase almost the whole night, I personally took the captain at the house of a Swedish doctor in Leicester Fields, I going first into the room, followed by my Lord Mordaunt.

“I found him in bed, and his sword at some distance from him upon the table, which I first seized and afterwards his person. Committing him to two constables, I wondered to see him yield up himself so tamely, being certainly a man of great courage, for

he appeared unconcerned from the beginning notwithstanding he was very certain to be found the chief actor in the tragedy. This gentleman had not long before commanded the forlorn hope at the Siege of Mons, where only two besides himself of fifty under his command came off with life, for which the Prince of Orange made him a lieutenant in his Guards and the King of Sweden gave him afterwards a troop of horse. Several persons suspected for accessories and the two accomplices—viz., the Swedish lieutenant and the Polander (whose names were Stern and Borosky, and the captain's name Fratz ¹)—were soon after taken by constables with my warrant and brought to my house, where before I could finish all the examinations, the King sent for me to attend him in Council, which was called on purpose for that occasion, with the prisoners and papers. His Majesty ordered me to inform him of my proceedings in that matter, both as to the way of the persons' apprehension and their examinations, and then examined them himself, giving me orders at the rising of the Council to put what had been said there into writing and form in order to the trial." ²

Suspicion falling upon Coningsmark, Reresby was sent to search his lodgings where he had been, but he had quitted them the day after the deed was committed. A week later, however, he was hunted down by a servant of Monmouth's, who found him in

¹ Vratz.

² "Memoirs of Sir John Reresby."

disguise at Gravesend "coming out of a sculler, intending the next day to go aboard a Swedish ship." The same day he appeared before the King, who, judging from the superficial way in which his examination was made, was undoubtedly predisposed in his favour, as he expressed the wish the next day that he might be acquitted. The Count, says Reresby, had "all the assurance imaginable ; was a fine gentleman of his person ; his hair was the longest for a man's I ever saw, for it came below his waist, and his parts were very quick."

It was thought at the time that in reality Monmouth's life had been attempted, but Stern and Boroski eventually confessed that their orders were not to shoot until the Duke had left the coach. On the last day of the month, these two and Vratz were condemned to death, while Coningsmark was acquitted, much to the indignation of the Monmouth party. Vratz to the last declared that as a soldier he had the privilege to be revenged for an affront offered to him by another, saying it had been his intention to challenge Thynne to single combat. He declined to confess his guilt, saying that the Pole acted under a misapprehension of his orders. Bishop Burnet, who attended him on the scaffold, which was erected at the foot of the Haymarket where the deed had been perpetrated, declared that never man died with more resolution or less fear, smiling at those whom he recognised in the windows and balconies. Reresby also says he

died entirely fearless, remaining firm to his friend Coningsmark to the last by declaring him to be guiltless. "Seeing me in my coach as he passed by in the cart to execution," says Sir John, "he bowed to me with a steady look as he did to those he knew amongst the spectators." Among these was the Duke of Monmouth who, the day before (March 9th), had attended his friend's burial in Westminster Abbey.¹

Lord Ogle's cousin german, the spirited Earl of Devonshire,² who upon one occasion had led Colonel Culpepper out of the Presence Chamber by his nose and then thrashed him, and who had been instrumental in tracing the murderers, after Coningsmark's acquittal challenged him to fight, and a meeting was arranged on the sands at Calais, but prevented owing to the Secretary of State getting scent of it. However, four years later he fell by the sword of another adversary in Hungary over some love affair.³ The sister and brother of this handsome villain were both notorious. The former became the mistress of King Augustus II. of Poland: the latter the lover of Sophia Dorothea of Zell, the beautiful wife of George I., who was divorced in 1694, and who is said to have fallen a victim to the jealousy of her rival the

¹ See "King Monmouth," where is an illustration of Thynne's tomb, bearing a *bas relief* representation of the attack upon Thynne.

² William Cavendish, afterwards first Duke.

³ Another account says he died of pleurisy after fighting at the Battle of Argas.



ELIZABETH PERCY, DUCHESS OF SOMERSET

Ross



Countess of Platen, the favourite mistress of the King's father, Ernest Augustus. This Countess, whose passion for Coningsmark was slighted, is supposed to have arranged a rendezvous between him and Princess Sophia, the result of which was a discovery, and Coningsmark was assassinated in a corridor which led from the royal apartments. George II., who implicitly believed in his mother's innocence, told Queen Caroline that during some repairs to the floor of the ante-room which led to Sophia's apartments in the old palace of Hanover, the bones of the unfortunate Count were brought to light. Queen Caroline told the story to Sir Robert Walpole.

To return to the lady who had innocently been the cause of such desperate doings in the Haymarket, for she by no means must be involved in that crime, once more had she become a widow much worth wooing. Two months after Thynne's murder the report was current that George Fitzroy, the King's natural son, who had succeeded to the dormant title of Northumberland, would be her next husband. The handsome and accomplished Earl, "a tall black man" like his father, was then in his twenty-seventh year. His mother, the Duchess of Cleveland, returned from Paris with the object of arranging this desirable match if possible, but an illegitimate, even a royal one, was beneath a Percy, so his rival claimant, the Duke of Somerset, was accepted, and on May 30, 1682, for a third time the heiress became a wife.

Charles Seymour, better known as "the Proud Duke," was his rival's senior by three years, and twice the age of his young wife, who at last had a better-hal she could look up to, or rather obey, for his closest relatives had to bow down and worship this haughty nobleman. The story is told in his later years that his second wife upon one occasion tapped him on the shoulder with her fan, for which she was severely rebuked. "My first Duchess," said the Duke, "was a Percy, and she never took such a liberty." When he took his siesta it was the custom for his daughters to take it in turns to stand sentinel beside him. Having one day slept longer than usual the girl grew weary and sat down, and when the great person awoke and saw this his dignity was considerably hurt.

The Duke's pride presumably was inherited from his feudal ancestors and royal connections. His father's uncle, Sir William Seymour, Earl of Hertford and second Duke of Somerset (the husband of Arabella Stuart who died in the Tower), was the great grandson of the Protector Somerset, whose father, Sir John Seymour, was brother to Jane Seymour, the Queen of Henry VIII. The third and fourth Dukes of Somerset leaving no issue, the title descended to "the Proud Duke's" brother Francis as fifth Duke, who died unmarried, and Charles succeeded as the sixth Duke of Somerset.

In 1685 this great nobleman was actively engaged in the west of England suppressing the Monmouth

rebellion.¹ Two years later James II. dismissed him from office for refusing to receive the Pope's nuncio. Upon declaring it was contrary to the laws of the land, the King remarked that he was above the law, to which his Grace replied, "I at least am aware that I am not." Though afterwards one of those who sided with "Dutch William," he repented in some measure when he actually came to the throne. Upon several occasions when he considered his dignity was hurt his behaviour was more like a spoiled child than anything else. When Sir William Wyndham, his son-in-law, a member of the Privy Council in Queen Anne's reign, was arraigned and refused bail for corresponding with the exiled Court, he spoke with such freedom that George I. deprived him of all his honours. For this indignity the Duke showed his resentment by having all the liveries of his servants, which were the same as those worn by the Royal footmen, stripped off their backs and thrown into the yard of Kensington Palace!

Three months after her marriage the young Duchess of Somerset was attacked with the small pox. The Countess of Northampton, writing to her sister at Exton, said she was so dangerously ill that her mother "never stirrs from her," and added that the complaint seized her as soon as she left town for the country. Towards the end of September, however, she had

¹ See "King Monmouth."

recovered, though her beauty was greatly blemished by the marks the malady had left behind.¹

The Duchess was a conspicuous figure at the Court at Kensington in the reigns of William and Anne. From the papers preserved at Belvoir we get a glimpse of her towards the close of the former reign at the royal card-table with "Handsome Sidney,"² who had aided in her escape from "Tom of Ten Thousand," the old Countess of Arlington (the mother of the beautiful Duchess of Grafton), then aged seventy, and several other grandees. The King entered and "made his legs to the ladies," whatever that formality may have been, and they took their stools. The Countess of Rutland, who records these things, was almost a stranger at Court, and his Majesty took particular notice of her, drawing her into conversation so that she had to come nearer and stand between his chair and the stool of the Duchess of Somerset, which made the fashionable busybodies inquire, "Who is she? What is she that the King takes such notice of and looks so pleased all the while he talks to?"

We will not, however, follow the Duchess through the next two reigns as the eighteenth century is beyond our province. She died in 1722, aged fifty-five, having had thirteen children, of whom a son and three daughters only lived to maturity.

Algernon succeeded his father in 1748, but died two

¹ Belvoir MSS., August and September, 1682.

² Then Earl of Romney.

years later. The Barony of Percy had devolved upon him on the death of his mother, and on his decease, as he had no male issue, to his son-in-law, Sir Hugh Smithson, ancestor of the present Duke of Northumberland, the re-creation dating from 1766.

At the town house of the Percys at Charing Cross, which, much modernised, remained until 1873, "the Proud Duke" and his Duchess lived in regal state, as they also did at Petworth, the Sussex mansion which passed to his son-in-law, Sir William Wyndham.

The year after the demolition of Northumberland House the famous lion that, for some offence to the ducal family, had been turned round with his back to St. James's appeared on the summit of the more historic house of Syon, where he now stands.

It was George Wyndham, third Earl of Egremont, the grandson of Sir William Wyndham and the thrice-wedded heiress, who formed the magnificent collection of pictures for which Petworth is famous. In the present classical structure it is difficult to trace anything of the old house of the Percys, as it was mainly reconstructed when it passed into "the Proud Duke's" possession. He it was who built the present front and rooms facing the west, and introduced the famous Grinling Gibbons carvings for which the house is noted. A drawing at Syon House depicts the older and more picturesque structure.

A rather "creepy" story is related by the Earl of Chesterfield, the Duchess of Somerset's uncle, who

figures more conspicuously in the Countess of Castlemaine's Memoir.¹

After his marriage with his first wife, Lady Anne Percy² (another beauty whose portrait by Lely hangs in the Tapestry Room), Chesterfield lived at Petworth with his father-in-law,³ who had retired into the country after the execution of Charles I.

Writing in 1652 the Earl says: "A very odd accident this year befel mee, for being come about a law-sute to London, and lying in a lodging with my door fast locked (and by reason of the great heat that summer, all the side curtains being flung a top of the teaster of my bed), I waking in the morning about eight o'clock and turning myselfe with intention to rise, planely saw, within a yard of my bedside, a thing all in white like a standing sheet with a knot a-top of it, about four or five foot heigh, which I considered a good while, and did rayse myselfe up in my bed to view it the better. At last I thrust out both my hands to catch hold of it, but in a moment like a shadow it slid to the feet of the bed, out of which I leaping after it, could see it no more. The little believe I ever had in things of this nature made mee the more concerned, and doubting least some ill might have happened to my wife, I rid home that

¹ See pp. 165-8.

² She was half-sister to the eleventh Earl, Joscelyn.

³ Algernon Percy, the tenth Earl, who had had the care of Charles I.'s children. *Vide* "Memoirs of the Martyr King."

day to Petworth in Sussex, where I had left her with her father, the Earl of Northumberland ; and as I was going up stairs to her chamber, I met one of my footmen, who told mee that hee was comming to me with a packet of letters, the which I having taken from him went to my wife, who I found in good health, being in company with the Lady Essex,[†] her sister, and another gentlewoman, one Mrs. Ramsey. And after the first salutation, they all asked mee what made mee to come home so much sooner than I intended. Whereupon I told them what had happened to mee that morning ; which they all wondering at, desired mee to open and read the letter that I had taken from the footman ; which having stil in my hand I immediately did, and read my wife's letter to mee aloud, wherein she desired my speedy return, as fearing that some ill would happen to mee, because that morning shee had seen a thing all in white, with a black face, standing by her bed side which had frightened her so much as to make her srike out so loud that her weemen came running into the room. I confess this seemed very strange, for, by examining all particulars, wee found that the same day, the same hour, and (as neer as could be computed) the same minute, all that had happened to mee had befallen her, being fortie miles asunder. The Lady Essex and Mrs. Ramsey were witnesses to both our relations, and acquainted

[†] Lady Elizabeth Percy, wife of Arthur Capel, Earl of Essex. Her portrait by Lely is at Petworth.

the Lord of Northumberland with it, who thought it a very extraordinary thing." ¹

There are four portraits of the Duchess of Somerset at Petworth (two by Kneller, one by Kerseboom, and one unknown), and one by Wissing at Hampton Court, which at one time was thought to represent the Countess of Ossory,² although when the picture was at Windsor it was always known as the Duchess of Somerset. The painting at the Palace of the Countess of Falmouth by Lely, when engraved in mezzotint over a century ago, was also misnamed "The Countess of Ossory," and Mrs. Jameson, in her work: "The Beauties of the Court of Charles II.," attempted to correct the error by naming it "The Duchess of Somerset," whom it certainly is not, as at the time the "Windsor Beauties" were painted by royal command the Duchess was in her infancy, and at the time of the painter's death she was only thirteen.³ There, however, can be no doubt about Kneller's portrait of the young Duchess which was lent to the Exhibition of National Portraits at South Kensington in 1866 by the Duke of Northumberland.

¹ Letter Book of Philip, second Earl of Chesterfield, pp. 11-13.

² It is engraved as such in Mrs. Jameson's work on "The Beauties of Charles II.'s Court."

³ Ernest Law's "Historical Catalogue of Hampton Court," p. 65. N.B. A replica of the portrait is at Chirk Castle, but named "Lady Denham." There is a miniature in the Plumley Collection at South Kensington Museum which was evidently copied from Lely's painting at Hampton Court. This also is wrongly named "The Duchess of Somerset."



ELIZABETH PERCY, DUCHESS OF SOMERSET

W. Verelst



In the following lines by Swift, inscribed as a prophecy or warning to good Queen Anne, the coarse allusion to the Duchess's red hair is said to have lost the witty writer his bishopric, as when he was nominated the Duchess had her revenge and used her influence against him :—

“And dear England, if aught I understand,
Beware of carrots from Northumberland;
Carrots sown Thynne a deep root may get,
If so be they are in Somer set;
Their Conyngs mark thou, for I have been told
They assassinate when young, and poison when old.
Root out these carrots, O thou whose name
Is backwards and forwards always the same,¹
And keep close to thee always that name
Which backwards and forwards is almost the same.²
And England, wouldst thou be happy still,
Bury those carrots under a Hill.”³

¹ Anna.

² Masham.

³ Lady Masham's maiden name.

THE DUCHESS OF PORTSMOUTH

UPON the eve of the departure of Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans, from Dover, in June, 1670, when she had been entrusted by Louis XIV. with that deplorable political negotiation which rendered Charles the tool of France, her royal brother lavished presents upon her, asking in return for one parting souvenir. With clever finesse Henrietta, who had not failed to notice the deep impression her pretty maid of honour had made (as had been fully intended), desired the graceful Louise de Keroualle to bring her jewel-casket that Charles might choose for himself. The King, with polished gallantry, took the blushing damsel's hand, saying she was the only jewel he coveted.

The snare which had been laid had caught its victim, but the clever agent of the Grand Monarque was well acquainted with her brother's fickle disposition. A too easy conquest would make no lasting impression upon his heart, and the interests of France would suffer. Absence makes the heart grow fonder, and therefore the Duchess called to the King's mind that the pretty Bretonne possessed parents to whom



LOUISE DE KEROUALLE, DUCHESS OF PORTSMOUTH



she was responsible for her safe return ; so Charles reluctantly waved adieu to the new charmer, who soon afterwards was to come and set up her permanent abode at Whitehall.

The King, when he had somewhat recovered from the shock of the loss of his favourite sister, her death having occurred within a month of her return to France,¹ invited the little maid of honour to England that she might be appointed in that position to his Queen. When Buckingham arrived at Paris as Envoy Extraordinary to investigate the particulars of Henrietta's sudden death, and at the same time to conclude the treaty with the French monarch, Louise de Keroualle wished it to be believed that it was her intention to take the veil. But the Duke, in pleading for his master, had by no means forgotten his own interests. He had seen the impression that had been made during the Dover transaction and fanned the flame, and when poor Henrietta died, satirically remarked to "Old Rowley" that in decent tenderness for her memory it was only right and proper he (the King) should take charge of her favourite attendant. But the clever Frenchwoman did not require much persuasion, and was far too worldly-disposed to entertain serious thoughts of retiring to a nunnery when such brilliant prospects were within her grasp.

The delicate affair at length being settled, the Duke, elated with the anticipation of governing the successor

¹ See p. 42.

to the all-powerful Duchess of Cleveland, with whom at that time he was daggers-drawn, instructed his attendants to escort the prize to the coast, saying he would join them anon. However, his head being preoccupied with all kinds of amorous intrigues and extravagancies of his own, when he put in an appearance, he ignored his responsibility, and leaving his fair charge to cross the Straits as best she might, sailed from Calais by himself, but with the promise that a yacht should be sent to bring her over.

Once in London, the diversions of the town drove all thought of the desolate demoiselle out of his head. Meanwhile, Louise having remained in expectancy for ten days, lodgings had to be found for her; while Montagu, the English Ambassador, sent over for a royal vessel and had her escorted by his own suite in due state to London, where the courteous and ceremonious Lord Arlington did all in his power to make amends for the slight she had suffered.

That winter the newly-appointed Maid of Honour was a conspicuous figure in the Court balls and masquerades—not yet queen in her own right, but a satellite like “la belle Stuart” (now Duchess of Richmond) and many other beauties with whom the Queen liked to be surrounded at these functions, as if to show off her superior radiance, but in reality to please her unfaithful spouse.

The French Ambassador, Colbert, meanwhile was watching with interest how the King’s infatuation

increased while the influence of the Duchess of Cleveland grew less and less. He and the crafty Arlington lost no opportunity of hinting that if the easy-going monarch got peace and quietness in her company, her tempestuous rival would have to give way. But on her side, the baby-faced diplomatist was in no hurry to surrender, and, fearing lest some one else might step into her shoes, what scruples she may have had were overcome by the Countess of Arlington, who, to celebrate the occasion of the Maid of Honour's rise to fame, organised a house-party at her country seat, Euston Hall, near Thetford.

The mansion that was burned down a few years since was a successor to that which had just been remodelled by Arlington out of an old seat of the Rookwoods. Evelyn, who was a great friend of the Earl, and was invited with Louise and Colbert upon this occasion, gives an interesting description of the house, which, with its various additions, had been made very magnificent. It was a massive brick structure, with four pavilions at the corners, after the style of a French *château*. The roof was balustraded and surmounted by urns and statues. The King's apartment was adorned with fresco paintings by Verrio, as were also the great hall and staircase.¹ In the centre of the fir-wainscoted gallery stood a billiard-table. There was a pretty chapel, library, bathing-rooms, laboratory, dispensary, &c., an orange-garden, a con-

¹ These were the artist's first examples in England.

servatory a hundred feet long, adorned with alabaster busts, and a greenhouse with a hall at the end of it. At the side of a canal beneath her ladyship's dressing-room window was a cascade which worked a corn-mill and the fountains, and raised water to the offices; and to reach the meadows opposite there was an ingenious mechanical screw-bridge, which carried one fifty feet over the canal and placed one in front of an inviting avenue of trees. These luxuries, with a hundred servants to look after one's wants, made this Norfolk seat a delightful place to stop at during the Newmarket races.

Evelyn, journeying down from London (in October, 1671), made a halt at Cheveley, close to Newmarket, the residence of the irresistible Harry Jermyn, of de Gramont fame, and joined the Court.

The merry monarch was in his element surrounded by his boon companions, but the philosopher was not a little scandalised by the "jolly blades, racing, dancing, feasting and revelling, more resembling a luxurious and abandoned rout than a Christian Court." The Duke of Buckingham was in the thick of it with his mistress, the Countess of Shrewsbury, and his band of fiddlers.¹ Tom Eliot, who in the first Charles's time had been dismissed as a dangerous companion for the Prince, but now of the bedchamber, was running his horse against the King's—"Woodcock" against "Flatfoot." The race over, Evelyn went on to Euston, where,

¹ Diary, October 9 and 21, 1671.

during the frequent visits of Old Rowley, he noticed a "fondness" which made him draw his own conclusions, and which were confirmed by a report afterwards circulated.

"On October 16th came all the great men from Newmarket," writes the diarist, "and other parts both of Suffolk and Norfolk to make their court, the whole house filled from one end to the other with lords, ladies, and gallants; there was such a furnished table as I had seldom seen, nor anything more splendid and free, so that fifteen days there were entertained at least 200 people, and half as many horses, besides servants and guards, at infinite expense. In the morning we went hunting and hawking; in the afternoon, till almost morning, to cards and dice, yet I must say without noise, swearing, quarrel or confusion of any sort. I who was no gamester had often discourse with the French Ambassador, Colbert, and went sometimes abroad on horseback with the ladies to take the air and now and then to hunting; thus idly passing the time but not without more often recess to my pretty apartment where I was quite out of all this hurry, and had leisure when I would to converse with books."

Three days later "Madam Carwell," as the English called the new mistress, went to the races in great state in his Majesty's coach and six, with two other coaches in attendance.¹

Of the early life of Louise de Keroualle very little

¹ Verney Papers.

is known. Madame de Sévigné, in her letters to her daughter, does not speak of her antecedents in the most respectful fashion. The timid modesty and simplicity that had captivated the King reminds one strangely of the deceptive cleverness of the novel without a hero—Miss Rebecca Sharp, whose ancestors on the maternal side, it will be remembered, were of noble French descent, and as the lady advanced in life, proportionately increased in rank and splendour. The progenitors of the future Duchess of Portsmouth derived their name from a certain Lady Keroualle de Penancoët of the fourteenth century, whose descendant in the seventeenth century, Guillaume de Penancour, married one Marie de Ploeuc de Timeur, a daughter of Marie de Rieux. These parents of the lady who was to play so important a part in the political intrigues of France and England were intimately acquainted with Evelyn's father-in-law, Sir Richard Browne, the English Ambassador at Paris, who, shortly before the Restoration upon an official visit to Brest, had been hospitably received by Monsieur Keroualle and his lady. Their small manor house being within a mile of the city, situated in the borough of the Recouvrance overlooking the port, Sir Richard returned the civility of the good couple in 1675, when they visited this country. Evelyn describes the father of the then Duchess of Portsmouth as "a soldierly person and a good fellow as the Bretons generally are ; his lady had been very handsome," he says, "and seemed a shrewd

understanding woman. Conversing with him in our garden, I found several words of the Breton language the same with our Welch."¹ It is in Monsieur Keroualle's favour that he made no ambitious use of his daughter's distinction.

With an influential friend at Court it doubtless was no difficult matter to place his daughter in the train of the sister-in-law of Louis XIV. This is more reasonable than the romantic story in the "*Histoire Secrète de la Duchesse de Portsmouth*," which says that the introduction to Henrietta's notice was that by her own account she had been abducted by the Duc de Beaufort, but in reality, according to this story, disguised as his page had accompanied him in his expedition to succour the Venetians from the hands of the Turks in Candia, in which action the Duc was cut to pieces. The fact that Sebastien, the brother of Louise, fought in and died shortly after this engagement, is supposed to have given rise to this story. Louise, it is further stated in the narrative, which has certain truths intermixed with the greater proportion of fiction to give it credence, was the youngest and most amiable of two pretty daughters of a retired wool merchant of Brittany, who placed her under the care of a widowed sister-in-law whose husband had been a dependent of the Duc de Beaufort, the widow receiving a pension from that nobleman. The Duc is said to have been first struck with the girl's beauty in the Tuileries Gardens, who, by no means indifferent

¹ Evelyn's Diary, June 15, 1675.

to his marked attention, at length was persuaded to run away with him.

There was another story, however, based upon a firmer foundation, about her antecedents, of which both Louvois and Madame de Sévigné speak in harsh terms, viz., her attachment to the Comte de Sault the year prior to her trip to Dover with the Duchess of Orleans. Saint-Simon even goes so far as to say that in placing Louise in the household of the Duchess of Orleans her parents were in the hopes her good looks would attract the attention of the Duchess's royal brother-in-law, and receive the advancement which ultimately fell to the lot of her other maid of honour, La Vallière,¹ whose superior beauty was enhanced in the eyes of her vain and romantic lover by her dove-like, dreamy, disinterested adoration.

Lady Mary Bertie, speaking of the new favourite at Whitehall in 1673, said she was not fifteen, though as tall as most women; but this was a mistake, for when she was introduced into the French Court in 1669 she was twenty-two, although some accounts made her three years younger.

On July 29, 1672, King Charles was presented with a son, who three years later was created Baron Setrington, Earl of March and Duke of Richmond, to which was added the title of Lennox, which, at the death of "la belle Stuart's" husband without issue, had lapsed to the Crown. In August, 1673, the happy

¹ See Forneron's "Louise de Keroualle," 1888, pp. 7, 8.

mother was created Baroness of Petersfield, Countess of Farnham, and Duchess of Portsmouth, and at the close of the year the Grand Monarque, to show his gratitude to Louise, as well as to flatter King Charles and confirm him in his alliance with himself against Holland, conferred on her the Duchy of Aubigny, which had reverted to the Crown of France.

But in her bed of roses there were thorns objectionably obtrusive. The new Duchess was detested by the populace, notwithstanding the striking contrast between her good breeding and the coarseness of her rival, the witty actress. The people knew full well with all her artful blandishments that there was a traitor in the camp who was making England subservient to France. The clever pen of Madame de Sévigné describes one of the discomforts of having Nell Gwyn as an enemy. The Duchess, she says, "could not foresee finding a young actress in her path by whom the King is bewitched. . . . He shares his attentions, his time, and his health between them both. . . . The actress is quite as proud as the Duchess of Portsmouth: she spites her, makes wry faces at her, assails her, and often carries the King off from her. She boasts of those points in which she is preferable—that she is young, silly, bold, debauched, and agreeable; that she can sing, dance, and play the part *de bonne foi*. She has a son by the King, and is determined that he shall be acknowledged. Here are her reasons—'This Duchess,' she says, 'acts the person of quality; she pretends that

she is related to everybody in France. No sooner does any grandee die than she puts on mourning. Ah, well ! if she is such a great lady, why did she descend to become a *catin* ? She ought to expire with shame : for myself it is my profession ; I don't pique myself on anything else. The King keeps me : I am at present his solely. I have brought him a son, whom I intend he shall acknowledge, and I am assured that he will, for he loves me quite as well as he does his Portsmouth.' This creature takes the top of the walk, and embarrasses and puts the Duchess out of countenance in a most extraordinary manner."

Louise Keroualle's habit of going in black at the decease of any member of the French nobility was burlesqued by Nell upon several occasions. On one of these, with the announcement of the decease of a prince of the blood came the news of the death of the Cham of Tartary, who the witty actress declared was as closely related to her as the French prince to her rival. The popularity of the Protestant mistress, and the hatred against the Roman Catholic one, is illustrated by the little incident at Oxford, when the mob surrounded Nell Gwyn's coach and insulted her, thinking it was the Duchess of Portsmouth. With her characteristic coarseness she explained the mistake, and was treated with every civility.

In May, 1674, the Duchess's sister, Henrietta, came over to England to try her fortune. A yacht was sent to fetch her from Brest, and for no particular reason,



LOUISE DE KEROUALLE, DUCHESS OF PORTSMOUTH



excepting influence, an annuity of six hundred pounds was settled upon her. In addition to this a marriage portion came from the Privy Purse, for in December of the same year she had the good fortune to form an alliance with a member of the noble house of Herbert.

Philip, the seventh Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, though a very desirable match in point of family, does not appear to have been blessed with a particularly gentle disposition. He was for ever settling arguments at the sword's point. Contemporary documents showed him continually mixed up in some quarrel.

Among the Verney Papers we find his lordship "treating the jury" after he had won a case against his uncle. "Every one was afraid to sit next to him, but at last Sir Fr. Vincent did; at last my lord began a small health of two bottles, which Sir Francis refusing to pledge, dash went a bottle at his head and, as it is said, broke it. They being parted, Sir Francis was getting into a coach, and alarm arising that my lord was coming with his sword drawn, Sir Francis refused to enter, saying he was never afraid of a naked sword in his life; and come he did, and at a pass my lord brake his sword; at which Sir Francis cried he scorned to take the advantage, and then threw away his sword and flew at him fiercely, beat him, and daubed him daintily, and so parted; a footman of my lord's followed mischievously Sir Francis into a boat, and him Sir Francis threw into the Thames. Two more

were coming with like intention, but some red coats, knowing Sir Francis, drew in his defence." ¹

In September, 1675, the irascible nobleman incurred the displeasure of his sister-in-law by not making adequate provision against his wife's lying-in as became a person of her quality. The Duchess threatened to complain to the King about her sister's grievances, to which Pembroke rather ungallantly replied that he would make an exhibition of the nation's grievance by setting her on her head at Charing Cross.²

The Earl celebrated Christmas Day in carrying off Lord North's chaplain, who was on his way to perform a service, and making him drunk, and the next year he killed a watchman (at Long's ordinary, in the Haymarket) by a blow with his fist, for which he was tried at Westminster Hall and acquitted. This pugilistic peer finished his brilliant career in 1683. His widow, who had set up her permanent abode in France, afterwards married the Marquis de Thoix, Governor of Blois, and lived until 1725.³

The luxurious apartments of the Duchess of Portsmouth at Whitehall, who was sometimes alluded to as

¹ Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 7, App. p. 493.

² Ibid., App. p. 466. See also Walpole's "Anecdotes of Painting," Wornum ed. p. 464.

³ She died at her house in the Rue de Varennes. Lady Charlotte Herbert, the daughter of the seventh Earl of Pembroke and Henrietta de Keroualle, married John, Lord Jeffries, the son of the notorious judge.

“The lady at the end of the Gallery,” were situated at the southern extremity of the Privy Garden, the subsequent site of Richmond House, the house of the second duke, her grandson, and more recently Richmond Terrace. They were furnished, Evelyn says, ten times more sumptuously than the Queen’s. Upon one occasion he had the privilege of attending the King to the Duchess’s “dressing-room within her bed chamber, where she was in her morning loose garment, her maids combing her, newly out of bed, his Majesty and the gallants standing about her ; but that which engaged my curiosity,” says Evelyn, “was the rich and splendid furniture of this woman’s apartment, now [1683] twice or thrice pulled down and rebuilt to satisfy her prodigal and expensive pleasures, whilst her Majesty’s does not exceed some gentlemen’s ladies in furniture and accommodation. Here I saw the new fabric of French tapestry, for design, tenderness of work, and incomparable imitation of the best paintings beyond anything I had ever beheld. Some pieces had Versailles, St. Germain, and other palaces of the French King, with huntings, figures, and landscapes, exotic fowls, and all to the life rarely done. Then for Japan cabinets, skreens, pendule clocks, great vases of wrought plate, tables, stands, chimney-furniture, sconces, branches, braseras, &c., all of massy silver and out of number, besides some of her Majesty’s best paintings.”¹

¹ Diary, October 4, 1683.

In the autumn of 1676, and in the following year, the fortunes of the French mistress were on the downward path. Ill-health, and the advent of the great Italian beauty, the Duchess of Mazarin, who came to take the Court by storm, played havoc with her prettiness. She became thin and depressed, and feeling in no humour to laugh with the world, the world, as it usually does in such cases, began to frown upon her.

There was a marked contrast in her reception at the autumn races of 1676, with that of 1671. His Majesty had omitted to find her a lodging, and she had to hire a house in a neighbouring village. Nor was she better treated when, in the following summer, in journeying back from Bath, where she had been to take the waters, she stopped at Windsor with the intention of sleeping in the castle, but as no accommodation was offered her, she had to continue her way to London. To add to her misfortunes her Grace met with an accident that resulted in a black eye, which calamity, far from gaining her sympathy from the heartless wits at Court, was only turned to ridicule.¹ Heavy hearts were out of place at Whitehall. To retain her position it was very evident that dejection or jealousy would have to give way to mirth and indifference.

One of the best points in favour of Louise de Keroualle was that she never sought to revenge herself for her royal lover's inconstancy by openly encouraging

¹ Courtin to Louis XIV. and Monsieur de Pomponne, July and August, 1676. See Forneron's "Louise de Keroualle."

other amours like Lady Castlemaine, and for this reason doubtless she regained as firm a footing as she had ever had, which she held until Charles's death.

Towards the close of 1677, Louise, then on a fair way to recovery, had a relapse. The doctors gave her only a month or so to live, and she accordingly made her will to dispose of her ill-gotten gains.

On December 27th, Lady Chaworth, writing to her brother, Lord Roos, said she was better though not expected to live beyond May of the following year. "Heere is talk of her leaving most of her fortune to a girl she now discovers to have had in France before her coming hither," writes her ladyship, though she added she did not give credit to the story as it came from Lady Anglesey.¹ Nor indeed was there truth in it as the will was made in favour of her son. The climax over, the Duchess made rapid strides towards recovery.

The rake, Harry Killigrew, returning from a debauch in the early hours one morning, had the discourtesy to knock at Nell Gwyn's door, and in rather forcible language tell her the good news of her rival's recovery, saying that he had come from the King. For the insult he was banished from Court.²

At the time of the Popish plot scare, the Duchess, in fear lest she might fall a victim, seriously contemplated retirement to her native country. Her wisest policy

¹ Belvoir MSS., Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 12, App. pt. ii. p. 44.

² Ibid. p. 43.

was to court the Monmouth party, she therefore lent Shaftesbury a helping hand until the danger had blown over, when she veered around again to the Duke of York's interests. We have elsewhere gone into the depths of the political intrigue at this period, so will not treat further upon the subject here.¹

After a visit to France in 1682, where she was received with all the courtesy and pomp of a royal personage, the position of the Duchess of Portsmouth was firmer than ever, notwithstanding a rather risky intrigue she had with Philippe de Vendôme, the son of Laura Mancini, the sister of the Duchess of Mazarin, who married the Duc de Vendôme.

Charles at first did not take much notice of the undisguised tenderness of his mistress for the handsome Grand Prior of France, who was her junior by nine years, but he was advised through the French Ambassador, in a delicate sort of way, to cease his marked attentions, but this he refused to do. Upon this he was ordered to quit the country, while Louis XIV., to prevent a scandal, offered to receive him much against his deserts, so long as the name of the Duchess was not compromised in any way. So the amorous grandson of Henry IV. and La Belle Gabrielle sailed and kept his secret and the incriminating letters which, at the time, the Duchess was in deadly fear would be produced. It was the all-powerful mistress who arranged the alliance between the Princess Anne and Prince George

¹ "King Monmouth," pp. 67-89.

of Denmark, and until the last the Duchess held her sovereignty. She it was who, at the time of the King's death, revealed that he was a Roman Catholic, and drew the Duke of York's attention to the fact that the solicitations of the Protestant Bishops in the death chamber were out of place. The dying monarch besought his brother over and over again to look after the Duchess and her son after he was gone.¹

Bishop Burnet, in speaking of the suspicions that were afloat that Charles was poisoned, relates the following story which was told him in 1709 by a Hampshire gentleman named Henley: "He told me, that, when the Duchess of Portsmouth came over to England in the year 1699, he heard that she had talked as if King Charles had been poisoned, which he desired to have from her own mouth. She gave him this account of it. She was always pressing the King to make both himself and his people easy, and to come to a full agreement with his parliament, and he was to come to a final resolution of sending away his brother, and of calling a parliament; which was to be executed the next day after he fell into that fit of which he died. She was put upon the secret, and spoke of it to no person alive, but to her confessor; but the confessor, she believed, told it to some who, seeing what was to follow, took that wicked course to prevent it."

Some six months after Charles II.'s death the Duchess

¹ Burnet's "Own Time."

of Portsmouth quitted England. James, who courteously bowed her out of the country, can have had but little respect for her memory as a little over two years after her departure the fine "crystal glass in the windows of her luxurious apartments at the end of the Long Gallery had disappeared, and the holes stopp't up with straw very scandalously!"¹

Owing to the carelessness of a servant a fire broke out here on April 10, 1691, which destroyed these and other buildings over the Stone Gallery down to the water side, including the lodgings of other ladies of notorious memory.² During the latter part of Charles II.'s reign, her Grace lived occasionally at Kensington House, near the Palace Gates,³ where the fashionable resorted to her Basset table, she not having taken kindly to the new game of Comette, not to mention private theatricals patronised by royalty. "An opera composed by Mr. Dryden and set by Grabuche," at which the seats were priced at a guinea and half a guinea, sounds something like a modern fashionable enterprise for a charitable purpose.

When William III. came to the throne her English pensions suddenly ceased, the new monarch granting

¹ June 21, 1688, "Verney Memoirs," vol. iv. p. 432.

² Evelyn's Diary, April 10, 1691.

³ The old mansion, Littleberries, at Mill Hill, near Hendon, according to local tradition, is said to have been her residence for some time. "The Gilt Room" here formerly contained a full-length portrait of her son, Charles Lennox, Duke of Richmond.

her quite an inadequate sum to keep pace with her extravagant habits. This calamity and her losses at the gaming table brought her creditors about her ears. But fortunately for her, Louis XIV., thankful for past services, was ever ready to keep her out of difficulties, and when he died she had the forethought to commute her allowances from the Treasury into a Government debenture.

She again visited the country of her triumphs in 1686, 1699, and 1715, and upon the last occasion tried to get an annuity out of George I.

A striking contrast to the French beauty in the zenith of her glory was the Duchess in her latter days of retirement in her dilapidated château of Aubigny, as Saint-Simon says, "very old, very penitent, and very poor," but it is gratifying to know that her reduced circumstances did not prevent her from making some atonement for her past sins by founding a convent for hospital nuns upon the estate which King Louis had granted to her.

Voltaire saw her at the age of seventy, and Selwyn when she was an octogenarian. The former says her face was still lovely and her figure commanding: the latter that she was still attractive. The old Duchess died in 1734, and was buried at Paris in the Church of the Barefooted Carmelites, where some of her boasted ancestry were interred.

Her son, Charles Lennox, Duke of Richmond, died in 1723, aged fifty, and his grandson, the third Duke,

who was born the year after Louise Keroualle's death, lived into the nineteenth century. The father of the present peer was his grandson. The first Duke was tall and dark, and had a swarthy complexion like his royal father. When he went over to Dutch William, although his mother told the Grand Monarque it would make her die of despair, his treason towards the Court of Saint-Germain did not bring her Grace's hairs prematurely with sorrows to the grave.

The most attractive portraits we have seen of the Duchess of Portsmouth are those by Lely at Coombe Abbey,¹ Wilton, and Althorp, and were probably painted soon after her arrival at Whitehall. The same artist's full-length portrait of her at Goodwood shows her older and more matronly in appearance. In Mignard's work, in the National Portrait Gallery, she is far less beautiful although her expression is amiable (one of the chief characteristics of her disposition). Varelst's portrait at Hampton Court also is by no means lovely, but is probably a correct representation of the vivacious Frenchwoman in the latter part of Charles II.'s reign. It is interesting to compare with this a tiny miniature by Petitot in the Jones' collection at South Kensington, painted when she was a modest maiden in Henrietta's train. At Cirencester House, Blenheim, and Dunham Massey, there are also portraits

¹ It was formerly supposed to represent the Countess of Castlemaine, and S. G. Steinman describes it as such in his "Memoir" of her.

of her by Lely, and at Burleigh House a life-like miniature by Cooper, who surely can never have been very popular with fashionable beauties from the fact that he never flattered. At Holland House there are also fine paintings of the French mistress by Gascar, Varelst, and a miniature by Dixon, and perhaps of greater interest is her favourite ring, which is preserved in this historic mansion. It was a gift of her royal lover, whose miniature it contains, with the initials C. R. engraved upon it.

FRANCES STUART, OR STEWART

I N that curious and interesting collection of funereal wax effigies once known as "the Ragged Regiment" at Westminster Abbey there is a figure of a faded beauty in the Court dress that she wore at the Coronation of Queen Anne. Frances Stuart, Duchess of Richmond, whom it represents, however, survived that celebration only a few months, and her favourite parrot, standing beside her (who had lived with its mistress in those days when Charles II., it was generally believed, had seriously contemplated divorcing the Queen that he might marry her), it is said did not survive its mistress many hours. The effigy of the faded beauty and the stuffed bird are a curious pair to contemplate when we think that this pet was probably present, passing the time with brief witticisms picked up from the Merry Monarch or his courtiers, while its mistress sat as model to the medallist Rotier for the figure of Britannia on our copper coins. "At my goldsmith's," says Pepys, "did observe the King's new medall, where in little there is Mrs. Stewart's face as well done as ever I saw anything in my whole life,



FRANCES STUART, DUCHESS OF RICHMOND

Goedkoop



I think : and a pretty thing it is, that he should choose her face to represent Britannia by."¹

We learn from Count Gramont that "La Belle Stuart" was not a little proud of her graceful limbs. "Miss Stuart is so convinced of the advantages she possesses over all other women," he says, "that it is hardly possible to praise any lady at Court for a well-turned arm and a fine leg but she is ready to dispute the point by demonstration." Indeed, her fame in this respect had travelled so far that an ambassador on arriving at England gave her a formal call to ask permission to see her calf and ankle, that he might report about them to his royal master.² It is amusing to note that in the copper coins of Charles II.'s time Britannia makes a point of revealing this part of her attractions.

But by no means must Frances Stuart be put on the same footing as Barbara Villiers or Nell Gwyn. Surrounded by temptations as she was, and the object of persistent solicitation from the King, it is remarkable that she held her ground and was the exception to the majority who were placed in a similar situation. Nor, indeed, was it possible to be amid such surroundings, moreover, the centre of admiration in a Court such as this, without a certain amount of contamination. By all accounts she was so far complacent that her good name was nearly compromised, if we may judge from

¹ Diary, February 25, 1666-67.

² MS. "Affaires Etrangères Angleterre," vol. 137, p. 400.

what Pepys has to say about her.¹ For all that Gramont relates of her want of wit, she must have been a clever woman, or perhaps artful is nearer the word, and this, we may gather, was inherited from her mother, who, by Evelyn's account, was one of the most cunning women in the world.

The maiden name of Mrs. Walter Stuart is not known. Her husband was the third son of the first Lord Blantyre, whose family was related to the Royal House of Stuart.

Frances Theresa was the elder and more beautiful daughter. Of her sister Sophia very little is known beyond the fact that she married Henry Bulkeley, the fourth son of Thomas, first Viscount Bulkeley, and Master of the Household to Charles II. and James II.

Frances was born about the year 1647, and educated in France. At the Court of Louis XIV. the beauty of the young girl attracted the attention of that susceptible monarch, and when he heard that Queen Henrietta proposed to take her to England in her train he persuaded her mother to let her remain that he might make a good match for her, saying that if she stopped he would see that she did not repent. The Queen-mother and Mrs. Stuart, however, may have had their suspicions of these fair promises, so with a jewel as a royal keepsake she came over to England to become one of the Maids of Honour to Queen Catherine of Braganza, only to receive in that position more

¹ Pepys' Diary, April 26, 1667.

marked attention than she had had in France. The King's sister Henrietta wrote on January 4, 1662 : "I would not loose this opportunity of writing to you by Mrs. Stewart, who is taking over her daughter to become one of the Queen, your wife's, future maids. If this were not the reason of her departure I should be very unwilling to let her go, for she is the prettiest girl in the world, and one of the best fitted of any I know to adorn a Court." The Countess of Castlemaine had sufficient tact not to thwart the King in his new fancies, that is to say so long as her own position was not endangered, consequently Frances Stuart was invariably her guest at her supper parties and other entertainments at which the King presided. An amusing incident is narrated by Pepys how upon one of these occasions a chine of beef could not be cooked owing to the Thames at high water entering the hostess's kitchen. "Zounds!" she exclaimed on hearing this unwelcome intelligence, "the meat should be roasted if the house had to be burnt down." The demolition of the Palace by fire, however, was reserved for a later date, as Lord Sandwich's lodgings provided the necessary culinary arrangements.

Though Frances is usually described as modest, it is to be feared our modern idea of female decorum would be in some measure scandalised by the license of those days. The Marquis de Ruvigny, on a visit to the Court in 1663, says she was one of the most modest ladies there, which, after all, did not say very

much, and he was a Frenchman. Still, there is no doubt that many stories that emanated from the Court were either untrue or greatly exaggerated. The King's character was so well known that that of the ladies who associated with him morally did not go for much. "Be sure never to talk to the King," was the maxim of the beautiful and virtuous Mrs. Godolphin, also a Maid of Honour to the Queen, who evidently knew what constructions might be put upon a *tête-à-tête*. But little Stuart at that time did not trouble her head much with what people thought of her. The fact of being kissed and petted in public by the King was no disgrace in her eyes, far from it; and so long as her royal lover kept within bounds she made no such rigid resolutions for herself.

We have gone thus far without describing the style of beauty which cast the charms of Lady Castlemaine in the shade. The classic regularity of her features, her tall, slight figure and her excellent taste in dress captivated all hearts. She was very graceful, and her early training in France gave her a well bred and polished air; but, as in the case of the handsome Duke of Monmouth, her mental qualities were far inferior to the outward appearance. But, as before stated, for all her dulness she certainly knew how to watch her own interests.

Before July, 1663, there were various rumours, but doubtless only rumours, that the new beauty had become the King's mistress.¹ On the 13th of that

¹ Pepys' Diary, 1662-63.

month we get a realistic picture of the rival Maids of Honour. On that day Mr. Pepys went to St. James's Park and mixed with the crowd of gallants waiting to see their Majesties pass by. "By and by the King and Queen, who looked in this dress (a white laced waistcoat and a crimson short pettycoat, and her hair dressed *à la negligence*) mighty pretty; and the King rode hand-in-hand with her. Here was also my Lady Castlemaine rode among the best of the ladies; but the King took, methought, no notice of her; nor when they 'light did anybody press (as she seemed to expect, and staid for it) to take her down, but was taken down by her own gentleman. She looked mighty out of humour, and had a yellow plume in her hat (which all took notice of), and yet is very handsome, but very melancholy; nor did anybody speak to her, nor she so much as smile or speak to anybody. I followed them up into Whitehall, and into the Queen's presence, where all the ladies walked, talking and fiddling with their hats and feathers, and changing and trying one another's by one another's heads, and laughing. But it was the finest sight to me, considering their great beautys and dress, that ever I did see in all my life. But above all Mrs. Stewart in this dress, with her hat cocked and a red plume, with her sweet eye, little Roman nose,¹ and excellent taille, is now the greatest beauty I ever saw, I think, in my life, and if

¹ The Roman nose is conspicuous in her wax effigy at Westminster Abbey.

ever woman can, do exceed my Lady Castlemaine, at least in this dress, nor do I wonder if the King changes, which I verily believe is the reason of his coldness to my Lady Castlemaine."

The estrangement in the present instance was owing to a recent quarrel because her Ladyship had discreetly refrained from inviting her rival to her supper parties, at which Charles was so angry that he swore he would never set foot within her rooms again.¹

One can picture the worthy Secretary of the Admiralty encountering "the lovely form," as he calls her, in one of the galleries at Whitehall, with "her hair all about her ears," returning from giving the Court painter a sitting at which the King and a score more worshippers were present; or imagine his mute admiration in contemplating Huysman's portrait (now in Buckingham Palace) of the popular Maid of Honour "in a buff doublet like a soldier."²

Frances Stuart was not called upon to be much in waiting, for the obvious reason that, however friendly the poor Queen may have shown herself towards her, the presence of this lady in her train must have been particularly obnoxious; and also from the fact that Charles monopolised the greater part of her time; indeed, to such a pass had things come that Catherine

¹ Letter from Cominges to Louis XIV., July 5, 1663.

² Diary, July 15 and August 26, 1664. This picture has been reproduced in the author's edition of the "De Gramont Memoirs." A full-length of her, by Kneller, is at Windsor.



FRANCES STUART, DUCHESS OF RICHMOND



would frequently hesitate entering her dressing-room for fear of encountering the pair of them. When the lady had her own apartments, those knowing courtiers who watched their interests and went with the tide hastened to ingratiate themselves.

Conspicuous among these was his grace of Buckingham, who had a clever way of insinuation when it suited his purpose to give his mind to it.

The laughter-loving girl was captivated with the Duke's gift of mimicry. Buckingham was a born actor, and ridiculed everything and everybody, and the clever way in which he imitated the peculiarities of his fellow-courtiers beneath their very noses without their seeing that they were the victims, sent the young Maid of Honour into fits of merriment.

He also encouraged her taste for music by writing songs for her, and her more frivolous amusements were pandered in the same way. Nothing pleased her better than childish romps and games, and in the salons at Whitehall, when the ladies and gentlemen of the Court were winning and losing fortunes at the basset table, little Stuart, surrounded by a crowd of ambitious admirers, could be seen building castles of cards. In this nimble art as in everything else Buckingham tried to become efficient, and so altogether his services proved so invaluable that when he was missing Frances at last would send all over the town to find her playmate. But with an unstable mind like the Duke's, vanity soon got the upper hand of ambition ; the man of

pleasure flattered himself that he would have an easy conquest and declared his passion, at which he was promptly made to understand that his services were no longer required.¹

In November, 1663, Lord Sandwich told Pepys that Buckingham, Arlington, and one or two other unscrupulous courtiers were on a committee "for the getting of Mrs. Stewart for the King," but the beauty's mother as well as the Queen Dowager were counter plotting, so their evil schemes fell through.

Only a few weeks before, Catherine of Braganza had fallen dangerously ill. Lord Arlington, writing to the Duke of Ormonde on November 17th, said, "The condition of the Queen is much worse, and the physicians give us but little hopes of her recovery; by the next you will hear she is either in a fair way to it, or dead."² Charles had a pathetic interview with his wife, and shed tears. Count Gramont with irony remarks: "He mingled his own with hers; and without supposing she would take him at his word, he conjured her to live for his sake. She had never yet disobeyed him; and however dangerous sudden impulses may be when one is between life and death, this transport of joy which might have proved fatal to her saved her life, and the King's wonderful tenderness had an effect for which every person did not thank heaven in the same manner." The French

¹ "Memoirs of Count 'de Gramont."

² Brown's "Miscellanea Aulica," p. 306.

Ambassador, in writing to King Louis, clearly hinted that in the event of the Queen's death Frances Stuart might succeed her. "I despair of her recovery (he wrote on November 1st) . . . The King seems to be deeply affected. Well! he supped none the less yesterday with Madame de Castlemaine, and had his usual talk with Mlle. Stewart, of whom he is excessively fond. There is already a talk of his marrying again, and everybody gives him a new wife according to his own inclination; and there are some who do not look beyond England to find one for him."¹

Until the early part of the year 1667, Charles remained as infatuated as ever with "La Belle Stuart," although she tried to shield her good name by discouraging the King's advances with her coolness. Frequently had she declined a title on dishonourable conditions, but now she had come to the wise conclusion that she would accept an offer from another quarter, viz., the Duke of Richmond, who secretly was at the bottom of this sudden change in her manner towards the Merry Monarch.

Count Gramont says it was owing to the jealousy of her rival, Lady Castlemaine, that the King first became aware of the intimacy between the Duke and Mistress Stuart. She had longed for an opportunity to be revenged upon her former friend who had usurped her position as first favourite. The apartments of

¹ Jusserand's "French Ambassador at the Court of Charles II.," p. 88.

Frances Stuart were entered from a small gallery which communicated with the King's private apartments. Here one evening she had arranged a secret assignation with her lover, and Lady Castlemaine, with the connivance of that crafty keeper of the back stairs, Chiffinch, being sure of her prey hastened to Charles, and with many ironical remarks informed him that he was the dupe of a pretended prude who at that moment was discoursing sweet passages with his successful rival. To prove her words she led the King herself to Miss Stuart's apartments, where sure enough was the Duke of Richmond, who, so soon as he could determine his best course of action under such trying circumstances, bowed and beat a hasty retreat as Charles, losing all control of his temper, thundered threats and menaces quite out of keeping with his ordinary easy-going humour. Frances, with great spirit, defended her lover. If she was forbidden the visits of a gentleman of the Duke's rank, whose intentions were honourable, she must indeed be a slave in a free country! She had the right to give her hand to whom she pleased, and if she might not marry as she proposed in England she would enter a convent in France and obtain tranquillity which she could not get elsewhere, and finally desired Charles to leave her apartments. Notwithstanding what Gramont says, the King was aware that the Duke was courting Mistress Stuart. Bishop Burnet tells us that Charles gave way to it, "pretending to take care of her, that he would



COBHAM HALL.



have good settlements made for her. He hoped by that means to have broken the matter decently, for he knew the Duke of Richmond's affairs were in disorder." It would be interesting to know more particulars of the romantic elopement which followed. The imagination must fill in the details of Pepys' brief passage : " He (the Duke) by a wile did fetch her to the Beare at the Bridge foot where a coach was ready, and they are stole away into Kent without the King's leave." ¹ This, the final assignation, was more skilfully planned than the previous one. The disgraced Duke, who had been forbidden the Court, and his bride evidently effected their escape in disguise. She is said to have joined him at an inn in Westminster. The Beare at the Bridge foot mentioned above was a well-known hostelry (besides a trysting-place for lovers) on the Southwark side of London Bridge, which was pulled down in 1761. Jesse says they fled on horseback into Surrey, where they were married by the Duke's chaplain, so if this be true the ceremony may have taken place before they took coach, perhaps at the tavern.² That grand old Elizabethan mansion, Cobham Hall in Kent, was the Duke's country seat, and here the happy pair spent their honeymoon. In the dining-room of this historic building may be seen

¹ Diary, April 3, 1667.

² Pepys speaks of Frances Stuart's betrothal to the Duke of Richmond nearly a fortnight before he speaks of their elopement, viz., on March 20, 1666-67 (see also March 18).

a fine full-length portrait of the bridegroom by Lely. He has a handsome but somewhat effeminate face, and judging from appearances one would imagine it would not have been necessary to reclaim him from vices, which his handsome wife said she intended to do when she married him.

Charles Stuart, fourth Duke of Richmond, being the only son of George Stuart, the fourth son of Esmé, third Duke of Lennox, was related to the King. He succeeded to the title in 1660 when in his twentieth year, but he cut rather an insignificant figure at Court, as he lacked the talent and brilliancy of Rochester, Buckingham, and other fashionable rakes, for which reason Charles rather despised him than otherwise. At the time of the runaway match the Duke had been left a widower only three months by the death of his second wife. Rumours had been constantly afloat that the King contemplated a separation from the Queen owing to her barrenness, and marrying the beautiful Maid of Honour. Buckingham and other enemies of the Duke of York favoured the idea of a divorce, which they undertook to carry through the Parliament, and had Frances Stuart not taken the step she did, there is no telling but that the report that was current, both in this country and in Portugal, may have proved only too true. Whether the Lord Clarendon brought about the match between the Duke of Richmond and the King's favourite is doubtful, though his enemies failed not to make the most of the opportunity ; but



CHARLES STUART, DUKE OF RICHMOND



the King certainly thought he was at the bottom of the secret marriage, and showed his resentment accordingly. On the night that Frances Stuart fled from Whitehall, Clarendon's son, Lord Cornbury, unaware of her departure, was going towards her lodgings, when he saw the King coming out "full of fury, and he, suspecting that Lord Cornbury was in this design, spoke to him as one in a rage that forgot all decency, and for some time would not hear Lord Cornbury speak in his own defence." Burnet, who relates this, adds that the event made so deep an impression upon Charles that he resolved to take the seal of office from his (Cornbury's) father.

As is well known the Lord Chancellor's disgrace happened shortly afterwards. The seal was delivered up on August 30, 1667.

Pepys gives the same version that Charles actually contemplated marriage, and knowing this, the Duke of York and Clarendon did all they could to forward the match with the Duke of Richmond, the latter of course being personally interested, so that the succession to the throne would descend to his own grandchildren.¹

Prior to her departure from Whitehall Frances is said to have had a touching interview with the Queen, in which she entreated forgiveness for the sorrow and uneasiness her presence at Court must have occasioned her. At the same time she was anxious to vindicate her resolution of retirement. We have Evelyn's

¹ Pepys' Diary, July 17, 1667; also Burnet's "Own Time."

authority that after she ran away she told a nobleman, whose name does not transpire, that both she and her husband had consulted the King about the marriage, and he did not object : that she " was come to that pass as to resolve to have married any gentleman of £1,500 a year that would have had her in honour : for it was come to that pass that she could not longer continue at Court without prostituting herself to the King whom she had so long kept off, though he had liberty more than any other had, or he ought to have, as to dalliance. She told this lord that she had reflected upon the occasion she had given the world to think her a bad woman, and that she had no way but to marry and leave the Court, rather in this way of discontent than otherwise, that the world might see that she sought not anything but honour ; and that she will never come to live at Court more than when she comes to town to come to kiss the Queene her mistress's hand ; and hopes though she hath little reason to hope, she can please her lord so as to reclaim him that they may yet live comfortably in the country on his estate." ¹

The King's ill-humour at the loss of this beauty was by no means assuaged when he received back his presents of jewellery he had given her. His feeling of indignation at the time is expressed in a letter dated August 26, 1667, to his sister Henrietta. " You may think me ill-natured," he says, " but if you con-

¹ Information given to Pepys by Evelyn. Pepys' Diary, April 26, 1667.



FRANCES STUART, DUCHESS OF RICHMOND



sider how hard a thing 'tis to swallow an injury done by a person I had so much tenderness for you will in some degree excuse the resentment I use towards her : you know my good nature enough to beleve that I could not be so severe if I had not great provocation. I assure you her carriage towards me has been as bad a breach of frindship and faith can make it, therefore I hope you will pardon me if I cannot so soon forgett an injury which went so neere my hart." Time, however, mends all grievances, and half a year sufficed to soften his feelings of resentment into forgiveness.

Towards the close of the year overtures were made that she should return to Court, but the Duke objected, as indeed did the Duchess herself. Three months later we are shocked to hear that those delicately moulded classic features are in danger of being spoiled by the smallpox. The anxiety and sympathy of the King in this catastrophe doubtless hastened a reconciliation, for in May, when she had recovered from the malady, Charles had paid her many public visits. On May 7, 1668, he wrote to his sister : "I was at the Duchesse of Richmond's, who you know I have not seene this twelve monthes. She is not much marked with the smallpox, and I must confesse this last affliction made me pardon all that is past and cannot hinder myselfe from wishing her very well, and I hope shee will not be much changed as soon as her eye is well, for she has a very great defluxion in it, and even some danger of

having a blemish in it, but now I beleeve the worst is past."

It was in this month that Pierce told Pepys how the King is "mighty hot upon the Duchess of Richmond, insomuch that upon Sunday was se'nnight at night, after he had ordered his guards and coach to be ready to carry him to the Park, he did on a sudden take a pair of oars or scullers, and all alone, or but one with him, go to Somerset House, and there, the garden door not being open, himself clamber over the walls to make a visit to her."¹

Our friend Pepys saw the Duchess in August, and far from meaning to be uncomplimentary, says her face was considerably *worse than it was* owing to the small-pox. Her Grace by this time was re-established at Court, being appointed lady of the Queen's bedchamber in the previous month, with lodgings at Whitehall overlooking the bowling green. The Queen and her lady were on the best of terms. During a visit of the Court to Audley End in October, 1670, her Majesty and the Duchesses of Richmond and Buckingham disguised themselves as yokels in red petticoats and waistcoats and went to Newport fair, riding pillion with three gentlemen on cart horses. By overacting their parts they attracted attention, and when the Queen and her chaperon, Sir Bernard Gascoign, were in a booth purchasing yellow stockings and "gloves stitched with blue," their eccentric dialect drew a crowd around

¹ Pepys, May 19, 1668.

them. Presently the Queen was recognised, so the masqueraders had to get to their horses as speedily as possible, but all the good people of the fair were equally alert, so they were escorted by a motley crew right up to the Palace gates.¹

After her marriage, says Lord Dartmouth, she had more complaisance than before, which the King could not forbear telling the Duke her husband when his Majesty had partaken of a little too much wine at Lord Townshend's Norfolk seat, Raynham Hall. We do not hear how the Duke received this statement, or if he was sober enough himself to take it seriously, but we may infer that he was not equally complaisant, as Burnet says he was sent upon a "sleeveless errand" to Denmark. Here he died in 1672, and his titles reverting to the King as nearest collateral heir, Charles bestowed them upon his natural son by the Duchess of Portsmouth, in August, 1675. The Duchess sold her life interest in the Cobham estate to Lord O'Brien in 1677, when there was a rumour afloat that she was secretly married to the Earl of Mulgrave. No such union, however, ever took place. Mulgrave probably courted the handsome widow as he did many other ladies, including the Princess Anne the year before her marriage, for which offence it was rumoured he was sent to Tangier in a leaky vessel.

Another admirer was a commoner named How (afterwards Vice-Chamberlain to Queen Anne), who

¹ Ivc's "Select Papers," p. 39.

publicly boasted of certain favours he had received. The Duchess promptly complained to the King, who appointed a committee, including Monmouth, to inquire into the matter, with the result that How was dismissed from the Court. More sincere attachments, however, had been those of George (afterwards Sir George) Hamilton, who eventually married Frances Jennings (the sister of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough), of whom we speak elsewhere, and Francis Digby, the Earl of Bristol's son, who is said to have courted death in the naval action with the Dutch in 1672, as his romantic love was not reciprocated.

Towards the close of Charles's reign the Duchess lived principally in Jermyn Street.¹ Her demands upon the privy purse were a striking contrast to those of her rapacious rival. Seven hundred pounds was her allowance in her most flourishing days, which was afterwards reduced to six hundred, and paid regularly after the King's death.

She was in attendance upon Mary of Modena at the birth of Prince Charles Edward, and, as before stated, was present at the Coronation of Queen Anne. She died on the fifteenth of October following, declaring her faith in the Roman Catholic Church. Having no issue, the bulk of her property was willed to her nephew Alexander, the fifth Lord Blantyre, the remainder forming small annuities to some gentlewomen

¹ On its north side, near Eagle Passage.



THE DUCHESS OF RICHMOND'S TOILET SET



who were charged with the care and maintenance of her pet cats.

The Duchess of Richmond and her husband were buried in Westminster Abbey, beneath the same monument as his ancestor, Lodowick Stuart, Duke of Richmond.

In Child's Bank are preserved a few relics of the "Old Devil Tavern" which adjoined it, among them a bust of Apollo that adorned the great room where Ben Jonson presided. In this "Apollo Chamber" the jewels of La Belle Stuart were dispersed in March, 1703. Among them were some trinkets which had been given her by the Duke of York when he was her valentine, a ring from Lord Mandeville,¹ a gay young spark of the Rochester type, who also had that honour; a jewel presented by Louis XIV. when she quitted France for England, and the pearl necklace, pendants, and other gifts which the Merry Monarch had bestowed to win her favours, and made doubly interesting as she had returned them when she stole away from Whitehall to get married to the reprobate Duke, but received them again as a peace offering when her royal lover had forgiven the trick which had been played upon him. The Duchess's watch and seal and silver-gilt dressing-case were left to Lord Blantyre. These have now descended to Mr. W. A. Baird, the grandson of the twelfth and last Baron, of "Lennoxlove."

¹ Afterwards third Duke of Manchester.

THE COUNTESES OF FALMOUTH AND ROCHESTER

I N the memoir of the Duchess of Somerset we have pointed out what is no doubt a mistake in Mrs. Jameson's work, viz., that the portrait engraved to represent the Duchess is that of Mary¹ Bagot, daughter of Colonel Hervey Bagot, Countess of Falmouth and Dorset, who was one of the ladies selected to form one of the Court painter's original set of "Windsor Beauties," eleven in number, by James II.'s catalogue. The Duchess of Somerset was not one of the number, a portrait, however, said to be her, by Wissing, was added with other Beauties, most of which were misnamed, in the reign of George I. In the South Kensington Museum there is a miniature which evidently is a copy of the head of Lely's painting of the Countess of Falmouth, which, presumably on the authority of Mrs. Jameson's work, has been also misnamed the Duchess of Somerset.

Judging by this portrait the Countess had one of the

¹ Her Christian name is often given as Elizabeth, which is an error.



MARY BAGOT, COUNTESS OF FALMOUTH



most pleasing faces of all the Court beauties. There is more simplicity, grace and ease than in the self-conscious appearance of some of the others, and indeed, if she lacked in modesty later in her career, at the time at least this portrait of her was painted she could compare very favourably with her companions. Count Gramont, who says she was for ever blushing, singles her out from the other Maids of Honour as the most beautiful and virtuous. In the latter respect her spouse was a great contrast. Few of his contemporaries attempt to garnish over his follies. Pepys describes him as "a most vicious person," while Clarendon, who truly had every cause to be caustic, as Falmouth had done his best to oppose the marriage of the Chancellor's daughter with the King's brother by circulating scandalous stories about her, says, "He was one in whom few other men (except the King) had ever observed any virtue or quality which they did not wish their best friends without."

Sir Charles Berkeley, created Lord Berkeley, Viscount Fitzharding and Earl of Falmouth, the second son of Sir Charles Berkeley, a Somersetshire knight, was in high favour at Court, being one of the select (?) few who were admitted into closest companionship with the King and his brother. When he was killed in the engagement at Southwold Bay, in 1665, both Charles and James were deeply afflicted with his loss. Clarendon says the former shed "floods of tears." The King's feelings upon receiving the news are expressed in a letter

to his favourite sister on June 8th: "I thank God," says Charles, "we have now the certayne newes of a very considerable victory over the Duch; you will see most of the particulars by the relation my Lord Hollis will shew you, though I have had as great a losse as 'tis possible in a good frinde, poore C. Barckely. It troubles me so much, as I hope you will excuse the shortnesse of this letter, haveing received the newes of it but two houers agoe."¹

Just a year after her husband's death Pepys records (June 24, 1666): "This day I saw my Lady Falmouth, with whom I remember now I have dined at my Lord Barkeley's heretofore, a pretty woman: she was now in her second or third mourning and pretty pleasant in her looks." When another year had passed, rumours were afloat that Henry Jermyn, the lady killer, was going to marry the attractive widow, thereby giving great offence to Lady Castlemaine, who just then was smiling upon that gallant.² In March, 1668-69, again we get a glimpse of her from the inimitable diarist in her official capacity as Maid of Honour to the Duchess of York, with whom, in company with other of the maids, she was playing after-dinner games, reminding us somewhat of a children's party twenty or thirty years ago. "There" (in the Treasurer's House at Deptford) "I did find the Duke of York and Duchess, with all the great ladies, sitting upon a carpet on the

¹ "Madame," by Julia Cartwright, p. 216.

² Pepys' Diary, July 29, 1667.

ground, there being no chairs, playing at 'I love my love with an A, because he is so and so ; and I hate him with an A, because of this and that' ; and some of them, but particularly my Lady Castlemaine, were very witty."

When the Duke of York lost his first wife, it was thought possible that Lady Falmouth might succeed her. "But," said the French Ambassador in a letter to Louis XIV., "I doubt whether this Prince's passion for her is so great as to lead him to marry her." Charles seems to have been also particularly kindly disposed towards her. In eight months she is said to have received seven thousand pounds.¹

In 1674, Lord Buckhurst, Earl of Dorset, Nell Gwyn's old admirer, then aged thirty-seven, proposed and was accepted. The witty and amorous nobleman was sentimental still, as may be judged from one of his love letters to the future Countess of Dorset in which is enclosed a large lock of his brown hair. Another curious document, preserved in that treasure house of the Sackvilles, Knole, is a *billet doux* which must have come into the new bride's possession after the death of her first lord, from a lady of the French Court when he acted as ambassador there. The writer says she could not express what she wished the evening he left, and certainly her bad English made her further remark almost as unintelligible. "The King," she says, "hass just now caread me to cis the quine's hand and to be

¹ Forneron's "Louise de Keroualle," pp. 78, 81.

lady of the bad chamber.”¹ What new favourite of the Grand Monarque was this? A beauty it may be sure, for Dorset otherwise would not have troubled his head about her.

The second husband was an improvement on the first in every way. Like Falmouth he had sown his wild oats somewhat lavishly, but by now had settled down, and was universally beloved for his generous and tender disposition, which by the way it is difficult to associate with his particularly harsh pen. Rochester aptly described him as “the best good man with the worst-natured muse”; and Burnet also says, “Never was so much ill nature in a pen as in his, joined with so much good nature as was in himself.”

Whether Dryden was paying off an old score, or was satirising the style of a rival poet in his biting verse on the Earl and his wife, it is difficult to guess, but his lines could scarcely be less complimentary.

“He lugged about the matrimonial load
Till fortune, blindly kind as well as he,
Has ill restored him to his liberty²;
Which he would use in his old sneaking way,
Drinking all night and dozing all the day.”

The Countess died in September, 1679, at the age of thirty-four, and was buried in Withyham Church, near

¹ Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 7, App. p. 260.

² Dorset does not seem to have appreciated this liberty, as he married a second wife, Mary, the daughter of James, Earl of Northampton.



HENRIETTA BOYLE, COUNTESS OF ROCHESTER



the old Sussex seat of the Sackvilles, Buckhurst Place. Her only daughter by her first husband, Lady Mary Berkeley, married Sir Gilbert Gerard, a gentleman whose name is associated with the story of "The Black Box," by which Monmouth's partisans endeavoured to prove his legitimacy.¹

There has been considerable confusion over the portraits of the three beauties, the wife of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, and the wives of the eldest and second son of Lord Chancellor Clarendon. As the latter, Lawrence Hyde, succeeded Wilmot as Earl of Rochester, this may be accounted for, and thus we have engraved portraits of Henrietta Boyle representing the runaway heiress, Elizabeth Malet. In the same way Henrietta Boyle, Lawrence Hyde's wife, has been confused with her sister-in-law, the daughter of Lord Capel, Theodosia Hyde, Viscountess Cornbury, as at one time they were both Mrs. Hydcs, and thus we have the engraved portrait of the former representing the languishing Mrs. Hyde of De Gramont's Memoirs, the lady who courted the attentions of young Jermyn to make herself envied by her fellow beauties.

"Mrs. Hyde," says the Count, "was one of the first beauties who were prejudiced with a blind prepossession in favour of Jermyn. She had just married a man whom she loved: by this marriage she became sister-in-law to the Duchess [of York], brilliant by her own

¹ "King Monmouth," p. 88.

native lustre, and full of pleasantry and wit. However, she was of opinion that so long as she was not talked of on account of Jermyn, all her other advantages would avail nothing for her glory. . . . She was of middle size, had a skin of dazzling whiteness, fine hands, and a foot surprisingly beautiful even in England: long custom had given such a languishing tenderness to her looks, that she never opened her eyes but like a Chinese." When Mulgrave fell into disgrace for writing love letters to the young Princess Anne, it was reported that Hyde had brought it about in vengeance for too great attentions which Mulgrave had paid to his Countess.¹

From Lely's portrait of this lady (in Lord Clarendon's collection at The Grove, Watford), the beauty of her hands may be studied but not her feet. Her expression inclines towards melancholy rather than tenderness, and her expressive eyes can in no way be likened to a Chinese. That of her sister-in-law, the Countess of Rochester, by the same painter at Hampton Court, is misleading, as of the two she looks the more vivacious and coquettish with her long fair ringlets and self-conscious expression. It dates from about the time of her marriage in 1663.

Of the five lovely daughters of Richard, first Earl of Burlington, she was considered the most beautiful,² but

¹ See Hist. MSS. Rep. 7, App. pp. 480, 498.

² Her portraits vary considerably. A miniature of her by Cooper at Althorp, and a painting by Lely in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence, are neither of them beautiful.

unlike most of the Court ladies of her time she was modest and unambitious, and did not share the common failing of having a string of admirers at her feet. She shone better in her home circle than in the gay saloons of Whitehall, where her husband as Lord High Treasurer and Privy Councillor was naturally a conspicuous figure, though never a very popular one, owing to his hasty temper and capacity for making enemies, but for all that he had sufficient tact combined with pluck to defend his father at the time of his fall as neither to risk his position, nor lower him in the estimation of the King. Pepys speaks of his defence at the Lord Chancellor's impeachment, which Waller the poet likened in greatness and worthiness "to the oration of Brutus." ¹

Lawrence Hyde was created Earl of Rochester in 1683, but his Countess only enjoyed the title four years, as she died in the second year of James II.'s reign. On this King's accession, the new Earl and his elder brother Henry, who had succeeded to the Clarendon title in 1674, were bound to their royal brother-in-law's fortunes, and at his abdication showed their inclinations in a marked manner. When both Houses of Parliament were in favour of William and Mary taking the throne, the latter's own uncle, Lord Clarendon, spoke with such vehemence against it, says Evelyn, "that it put him by all preferment, which must doubtless have been as great as could have been

¹ Pepys' Diary, November 19, 1667.

given him. My Lord of Rochester, his brother, overshoot himself by the same carriage and stiffness which their friends thought they might have well spared, when they saw how it was likely to be over-ruled, and that it had been sufficient to have declared their dissent with less passion." ¹ The wives of these two ministers had been anxious to make Evelyn's daughter, Mary, a maid of honour to the Queen, but her tastes did not lie in the direction of the Court. This beautiful and accomplished girl died of the smallpox in her twentieth year.

The Countess of Rochester's eldest daughter, Lady Anne Hyde, inherited her mother's good looks. She was united at the age of fifteen to the second Earl of Ossory, but died three years afterwards. The bereaved feelings of the two fathers in the loss of their daughters within a few months of one another are graphically handed down to us in the Earl's papers and in Evelyn's famous diary. In both one can see how cruelly the heartstrings were wrung.²

The young Countess of Ossory is said to have foretold her death the year before. She dreamed that some one knocked at her chamber door, and going to answer it, saw there standing the figure of Lady Kildare,³ who had died

¹ Evelyn's Diary, February 21, 1689.

² Jameson's "Beauties of the Court of Charles II.," pp. 206, 207; and Evelyn's Diary.

³ A portrait by Lely of the Countess of Kildare, a beautiful young girl of about sixteen, was sold in the Peel Heirloom collection in 1900 to Messrs. Agnew. But possibly this was Elizabeth Ranelagh,



HENRIETTA BOYLE, COUNTESS OF ROCHESTER



shortly before, muffled up in a hood. "Sister, is it you?" she cried out. "What makes you come in this manner?" "Don't be frightened, for I come on a very serious affair," replied the spectre. "It is to tell you that you will die very soon."¹

Rochester pathetically alludes to his wife's failing health at the time of their sad loss. "A wife," he says, "for whom I had all the tenderness imaginable . . . whose fainting heart and weak spirits I was to comfort and keep up when I had none myself."

What little we know of the other Countess of Rochester: "the melancholy heiress" with whom John Wilmot ran away, makes her at least a more interesting figure than Henrietta Boyle. By no means was her face her only fortune, otherwise probably she would have not had so many aspirants for her hand. Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of John Malet of Enmore in Somerset, had a large selection to choose from among them, William, Lord Herbert, afterwards Earl of Pembroke, Lord Hinchinbrooke, afterwards second Earl of Sandwich, John, Lord Butler, afterwards Viscount Clonmore, and Sir Francis Popham.

Of these, Lord Hinchinbrooke bid fair to be the winner, for the ladies at this time seem to have been competed for like the prizes in a lottery. What they

Countess of Kildare, who died in the eighteenth century at a great age. See p. 285; also the author's edition of the "Memoirs of Count de Gramont."

¹ Jameson, p. 206.

were worth in pounds, shillings and pence usually is taken into account before anything, to judge by the contemporary writings of matchmaking fathers and mothers. But in Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, he had a dangerous rival, for that young profligate would stick at nothing to gain his own ends, and being a favourite with the King, had powerful influence to support him. But Rochester could do nothing decently. Seeing that his suit did not bid fair for success, he had recourse to forcible means.

On May 26, 1665, the heiress was being escorted home by her grandfather, Sir Francis Hawley, from the lodgings of the beauty, Frances Stuart, at Whitehall, with whom she had supped, when the coach, upon reaching Charing Cross, was held up by a party of armed men. She was hurried into another coach, in which there were two women ready to receive her, and to her consternation driven off at a brisk pace to some unknown destination. The Earl himself was not present at the assault, but was awaiting the abducted lady in the vicinity of Uxbridge, where, the hue and cry having been raised, he was captured and marched off to the Tower. But only for one of those temporary disgraces which were soon forgiven by the good-natured Charles. After such an outrage one would have imagined the madcap Earl had lost his last chance, but Miss Malet perhaps secretly enjoyed this mediæval sort of romantic courtship. In any case, in the following year Pepys tells us that "the business between my

Lord Hinchinbrooke and Mrs. Mallet is quite broke off; he attending her at Tunbridge, and she declaring her affections to be settled: and he not being fully pleased with the vanity and liberty of her carriage.”¹

Scarcely six months afterwards we get one of those delightful little peeps from Pepys, from which we find that Rochester eventually was rewarded for his pains: “Soon as dined, my wife and I went to the Duke’s playhouse, and there saw ‘Heraclius,’ an excellent play, to my extraordinary content; and the more from the house being very full, and great company; among others, Mrs. Steward very fine, with her locks done up with puffs, as my wife calls them, and several other great ladies had their hair so, though I do not like it; but my wife do mightily—but it is only because she sees it is the fashion. Here I saw my Lord Rochester and his lady, Mrs. Mallet, who hath after all this ado married him; and as I hear some say in the pit, it is a great act of charity, for he hath no estate. But it was pleasant to see how everybody rose up when my Lord John Butler, the Duke of Ormond’s son, come into the pit towards the end of the play, who was a servant [suitor] to Mrs. Mallet, and now smiled upon her and she on him.”²

The Countess of Rochester, however, did not figure much in London society, spending her time principally at her houses in Oxfordshire and Somersetshire: Adder-

¹ Diary, August 26, 1666.

² *Ibid.*, February 4, 1666-67.

bury and Enmore. Writing from the former in June, 1672, Lady Mary Bertie says, "Lady Rochester kept my brother's birthday with great solemnity, causing the bells to be rung, and making a great dinner. We concluded it by dancing sixteen dances after supper, and because the weather was hot, we danced some of them in the fore-court, some in the garden, and the rest in the hall." The diversions of the country had but little attraction for Rochester, and his visits were few and far between. The following letter is characteristic :—

"Run away like a rascal without taking leave, dear wife : it is an impolite way of proceeding which a modest man ought to be ashamed of. I have left you a prey to your own imaginations amongst my relations—the worst of damnations ; but there will come an hour of deliverance, till when, may my mother be merciful to you ; so I commit you to what shall ensue, woman to woman, wife to mother, in hopes of a future appearance in glory."

The Countess evidently did not get on well with her mother-in-law, and though in the above instance he ignominiously decamped to let them settle their little differences, he occasionally tried to throw oil on the troubled waters. "You must, I think, obey my mother in her commands to wait on her at Aylesbury, as I told you in my last letter—I will only desire you not to be too much amazed at the thoughts my mother has of you since being mere imaginations, they will as easily vanish, as they were groundlessly erected ; for my own part, I will make it my endeavour they may."

The Dowager Countess—the widow of the gallant cavalier who followed the fortunes of the exiled Charles after Worcester fight—mother-like, treated her rake son's foibles leniently, and took his side in domestic differences. Curiously enough the portrait of this lady at Ditchley (her first husband was Sir F. H. Lee of Ditchley) was engraved many years ago as her daughter-in-law: the melancholy heiress, as Gramont calls her, and this plate has been used over and over again. Scarcely a compliment to the latter lady, as Anne, Countess of Rochester, *née* St. John, looks here an austere middle-aged woman, by no means a beauty, though she possesses good features, but certainly she may have been pretty once upon a time. We may here point out that the only known portraits of the second Earl of Rochester's wife are owned by descendants of the Malets of Enmore, and judging from one of them in the possession of Colonel Harold Malet she had a far more pleasing expression than her mother-in-law.¹ Still it is easy to misjudge from outward appearances, and that her disposition was not as sweet as it might have been, we may gather from another letter of her erring husband, which was as follows:—

“MY WIFE,—The difficulties of pleasing your ladyship do increase so fast upon me and are grown so

¹ *Vide* the author's edition of the “Memoirs of Count de Gramont,” in which one of the portraits has been reproduced by kind permission of Colonel Malet.

numerous, that to a man less resolved than myself never to give it over, it would appear a madness ever to attempt it more ; but through your frailties mine ought not to multiply : you may, therefore, secure yourself that it will not be easy for you to put me out of my constant resolutions to satisfy you in all I can. I confess there is nothing will so much contribute to my assistance in this as your dealing freely with me ; for since you have thought it a wise thing to trust me less and have reserves, it has been out of my power to make the best of my proceedings effectual to what I intended them. At a distance I am likeliest to learn your mind, for you have not a very obliging way of delivering it by word of mouth ; if, therefore, you will let me know the particulars in which I may be useful to you, I will show my readiness as to my own part ; and if I fail of the success I wish, it shall not be the fault of

“Your humble servant,
“ROCHESTER.”

The Earl's only son Charles died at the age of fourteen, in 1681, the year after his father's decease. There is a very fine portrait of the little fellow in one of the dining-rooms at Hinchinbrooke, in which he inherits more of his mother's beauty than a resemblance to the effeminate face of his sire.

If the depraved father could not set a good example to his boy, he could at least point out the way he should go. “Avoid idleness, scorn lying, and God will bless

you," he wrote to him. "Dear child, learn your book, and be obedient, and you shall see what a father I will be to you." His three daughters, Anne, Mallet, and Elizabeth, married respectively Lord Broke, Viscount Lisburne, and the Earl of Sandwich, the last being the son of the Countess of Rochester's old admirer, Lord Hinchinbrooke.

LUCY WALTER

THOSE who have pondered over the handsome but effeminate face of the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth as handed down to us by the brush of Lely or Mary Beale, cannot but have been struck by its dissimilarity to the harsh and saturnine features of the father who owned him as his son. The likeness he bore to his beautiful mother, judging from the few portraits of her there are existing, is unmistakable, but to Charles—none.

Now, at the end of the long picture gallery at Althorp there is a portrait which physiognomists might do well to study. It is a handsome young soldier of the time of the Protectorate, with a haughty brow and upper lip and, indeed, in general expression strikingly like the Duke of Monmouth. This is the brother of Algernon Sidney, Colonel Robert, whose name figures but little in history, it is true, but a character who commands our interest when we consider that there is strong evidence in favour that he, and not Charles II., was Monmouth's father.

James II. is very clear and straightforward in his



LUCY WALTER



opinion, although one must also remember that it is only natural that it should be a biased one. Algernon, he says, was the first to be attracted by the lovely Welsh girl, Lucy Walter (not Walters, as the name is given in most histories), whom he met in London when he was an officer under Cromwell; but, his regiment being suddenly called away, a dishonourable arrangement that he was on the point of making fell through, by which Colonel Robert stole a march upon his brother. Whether or not he in the first instance befriended her on his brother's behalf does not transpire; in any case he was so far interested in her movements that when she went over to Holland she became his mistress.

The diarist Evelyn was undoubtedly wrong in stating that Lucy was of low origin, but her parents had evidently come down in the world. James, who was at the Hague at the time of his brother's arrival there in September, 1648, says "she was born of a gentleman's family in Wales, but having little means and less grace came to London to make her fortune." Whether her mother and father also migrated to the metropolis is not known, but they were both living at the time that Lucy left England, the latter dying in 1650, and the former five years later. The probability is that they continued to live in Wales, and that Lucy went to live with her mother's sister, Margaret Gosfright, *née* Prothero, who had married a Dutch merchant of St. Dunstan's in the West. As to whether this aunt

of Lucy had anything to do with Algernon Sidney's "trafficking" with her for fifty broad pieces¹ is difficult to conjecture, but she was an unprincipled woman, as will be explained later on, and for some reason or other "was put to prison about her niece's going beyond sea." In any case her husband must be exonerated from any suspicion, as he censured his wife's sister for leaving her daughter "abroad in an ill way of living," upon which he was assured that Lucy was *married* to the King.²

On the road which runs between St. David's and Haverfordwest may be seen the ruins of Roch Castle, which was dismantled and burnt during the Civil War, after holding out bravely for the Royalist cause. This was the ancestral home of the Walter family, and in 1644 Lucy's parents (William Walter and his wife Elizabeth, niece of the Earl of Carbery), it may be inferred, migrated to Rhôsmarket, some twelve miles away, where at another seat, "the Great House" (which has long since disappeared), the future mother of the Duke of Monmouth is said to have been born some eight or ten years before the destruction of the fortress.

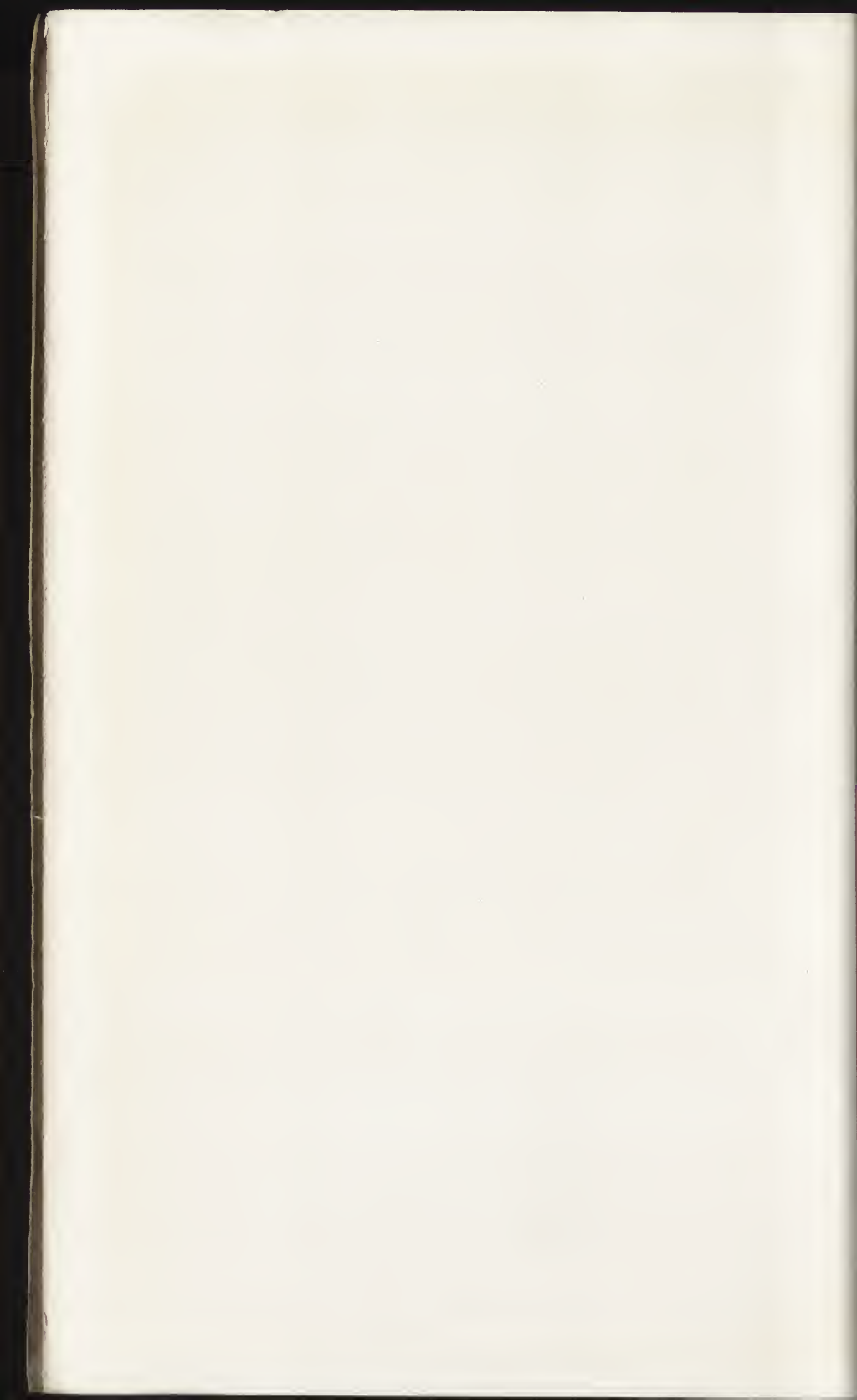
It is generally supposed that Charles first saw this "brave, beautiful, bold, but insipid creature," as Evelyn calls her, shortly after his arrival at the Hague, early in September, 1648. James implies that he there heard

¹ Macpherson's "Original Papers," vol. i. p. 76.

² Add. MSS. 28094, f. 71.



COLONEL ROBERT SIDNEY



of her and got her out of Colonel Sidney's possession, who was willing enough to part with her ; but it must be remembered that the son the King afterwards acknowledged to be his own, was born on April 9, 1649—one of the facts that made "the knowing world," as James puts it, have very serious doubts.

The Countess Dunois, writing half a century later, says with more flavour of romance than truth that Charles first met Lucy Walter in Wales. That assertion, however, must be dismissed, but it is possible he may have seen her at Paris or Saint-Germain early in the year 1648, when Lord Glamorgan arrived from England accompanied by Lucy's kinsman, John Barlow (the name she afterwards assumed), and possibly Lucy herself.¹

Evelyn has but little doubt that young James Crofts, afterwards Duke of Monmouth, was the son of Colonel Sidney. He, as well as James, speaks of the likeness between them. "When he grew to be a man," says the latter, "he very much resembled the Colonel both in stature and countenance, even to a wart on his face."² This distinguishing mark is to be discerned on several of the Duke's portraits.

Charles, though still in his teens when welcomed at the Hague in mid-September, 1648, had long since taken his degree as a thorough man of the world. The companionship of the profligate Buckingham and many

¹ "King Monmouth," p. 5.

² Macpherson's "Original Papers," vol. i. p. 76.

other unprincipled courtiers who frequented the English Court at Paris had instilled a premature taste for gallantry. Nor was he then a novice by any means, for after his visit to Jersey in 1646 a certain Donna Maria Stuart, of the family of the Barons of St. Marzo, is said to have presented him with a son, one Don Giacomo Stuart, who died in Naples, and always declared that he headed the list of the illegitimate children of the Merry Monarch. Clarendon tells us that in the previous year, when Charles was in the west of England, an undesirable associate who was having an evil influence over the Prince had to be removed from all intercourse with him.¹

To return to Lucy Walter, Clarendon fully believed that the object of her going to Holland was with the express purpose of enslaving the heart of Charles, but whether with the ambitious view of becoming his wife, or of occupying a more equivocal position, must be left in doubt. The Chancellor said the latter was the case, but there is also evidence to support the theory that some sort of compact was made which will be explained later. However this may have been, if we take into consideration the date of Charles's arrival in Holland and the date of Monmouth's birth, it can only be said that, if she put in an appearance at the Hague *after* he

¹ "The Bishop of Salisbury drew attention to the Council when at Barnstable to the bad companionship of a youth named Wheeler, who forthwith was ejected from the town." (Clarendon's "History of the Rebellion," Book ix.)

came there, her conquest not only must have been very rapid, but Colonel Robert Sidney's possession must have been equally brief. On the face of these facts is it not far more probable that her ambitious designs led her in the first instance to Paris, that she had fallen in there both with Sidney and with Charles, and that she followed the latter to keep hold of her influence over him?

Lucy declared that the marriage ceremony was duly solemnised, and at the time and for many years afterwards there were many who fully believed it to be the case; indeed, two knights, Sir George Parry and Sir Henry Pomeroy, declared they were witnesses to the union at Liège. It would appear also that Edward Progers, the groom of the bedchamber and confidant in all the King's intrigues at the time, and two others were also present, at least so we may judge from a curious document which is still to be seen at Dysart House, Fife:—

“Sir J. Cooke told me,” says the writer in an annotated almanac of the year 1696, “that E. Newburgh told him that he was witness to K. C^h marriage wth D. Monmouth's mother, and that Progers and anoy^r also werr so to.”

As is well known, at the time that Monmouth's partizans were trying to prove his legitimacy, reports were freely circulated that Dr. John Cosin, Bishop of Durham, had been entrusted with the marriage certificate, and a certain black box containing this

documentary proof at the time of the prelate's death in 1672 had been left in the custody of Sir Gilbert Gerard, his son-in-law. Friends of "the Protestant Duke" were indefatigable in their search for direct evidence, and had obtained witnesses ready to swear to anything, when Gerard burst the bubble by admitting that the whole thing was a fabrication.¹ The same day that he declared this before the Council the King certified in the *Gazette* that he had never been married to any woman but the Queen.

A story that was also current, that Lucy had had in her possession a letter from Charles in which he owned his marriage with her, and that it was forcibly got out of her keeping, however, had some basis in truth. She died, as will be pointed out later, before the Restoration. Three years before that event Sir Arthur Slingsby wrote to Charles that it would be advisable "to get certain papers and letters out of her hands that concerns your Majesty," and to obtain them he suggested that her trunks should be searched.² Progers, before alluded to, when he abducted her boy by the King's command, probably managed to get hold of the documents at the same time.³ But we are anticipating matters, and must return to the cause of these ruptures.

While Charles was in Scotland doing penance for his sins under the strict Puritanical discipline, his mistress,

¹ Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 5, p. 318.

² Calendar of Clarendon State Papers, vol. iii. p. 384-85.

³ Add. MSS. 28094, f. 71.



CHARLES II



entirely regardless of her vows, whether legal or otherwise, had a daughter by Lord Taaffe,¹ who was entrusted with the King's private disbursements in Holland—the nobleman who, according to Count Gramont, some years later declined to acknowledge the paternity of a child of Miss Warmister, one of the Queen's Maids of Honour.

Some time after this the Princess of Orange, writing to her brother about his "wife" (a term that she and the Queen-mother invariably used in speaking of Lucy Walter), says: "Your wife desires me to present her humble duty to you, which is all shee can say. I tell her 'tis because she thinks of another husband, and does not follow your example of being as constant a wife as you are a husband." The gentleman alluded to was another gay spark, Colonel Thomas Howard (a brother of James, third Earl of Suffolk), who fell a victim to Lucy's charms towards the close of her brief career.

Notwithstanding these scandals and the empty state of the privy purse, Charles managed to keep Lucy well provided with money. She had luxurious lodgings at Antwerp, and her son was put out to nurse at Schiedam, near Rotterdam. In a little booklet of the seventeenth century we learn the following particulars of the first attempt to abduct the boy:—

"Some time after he had been there at nurse, his mother, being desirous to see him, took her gentleman

¹ Afterwards second Earl of Carlingford.

with her, who, at a place where she called by the way to pay a visit, desired to be excused for some small time from attending on her till he had despatched some extraordinary business which he pretended, promising to return again immediately, and, having obtained her permission, away he went, but, like an ungrateful and treacherous villain, repaired immediately to Mr. Ghysens at Schiedam, where the princely babe was nursed, and, pretending to be sent for that purpose by his mother, carried him and the nurse both away. His lady waited his coming with abundance of patience, but at length, night drawing on and no gentleman appearing, she began to suspect herself to be abused, whereupon, a gentleman offering to wait on her thither, she presently posted away, and being arrived and finding her son gone, I want words wherewith to express her grief and surprise : she rent her apparel, tore the hair off her head, and with whole showers of tears bewailed the greatness of her loss and the deplorable condition of her condition, yet suffered not grief to prevail so far as to make her incapable of endeavouring to right herself, wherefore she presently gave orders for the providing horses, which being ready, she presently posted away to Maeslandsluce, riding all night ; she suspected that he was carried thither in order to be transported to England, there having been some inquiry made after him. She arrived there early in the morning, just as the Sieur Newport one of the Lords of the State and the Mayor of Maesland, were

taking boat for the Heauge ; those that were with her advised her to make her application to him, as the likeliest person to assist her, telling her that he could speak English, whereupon she addressed herself to him in that language, discovering to him the condition of herself and son, and the relation they stood unto the King of England, with the circumstances of his stealing away ; and pulling out a handful of gold, 'If money will do it,' said she, 'I will spare for no charges,' imploring his help and assistance for the recovery of that royal treasure. This occasioned abundance of people flocking about them to learn the occasion of his address, wherefore he advised her to go into some house and make no noys about it, least she thereby prevent the accomplishing her desire, which she did, and he presently ordered a general search to be made and that no ships should go off till they were searched, notwithstanding which they could make no discovery of him till about ten or twelve days after, when he was found at Loosdymen, where he had been all that time concealed, and having to her inexpressible joy recovered him, she took a stately house at Boscal, where they resided for some time." ¹

All this seems to be very harsh and cruel, but there was another side to the story, of which we get an insight from information sent to the King by one of his grooms of the bedchamber, Lieut.-Colonel Daniel

¹ "An Historical Account of the Heroick Life," &c., of James, Duke of Monmouth, 1683.

O'Neale. Writing from the Hague early in the year 1656, he says: "I am much troubled to see the prejudice hir being here does your Majestie, for every idle action of hers brings your Majestie upon the stage." Certain disclosures made by a midwife had reached the ears of Lucy's maid, who threatened to reveal them. To save a public scandal O'Neale had recourse to bribery, for the maid had survived a murderous attack with a bodkin which her mistress had made upon her. "It were well if your Majestie will owen that child," continues O'Neale (which looks as if Charles had not yet acknowledged the future Duke of Monmouth as his son), "to send hir your positive command to deliver him unto whom your Majestie will appoint."

The diplomacy, or rather duplicity, of the first Charles had already appeared in the policy of the second. There is no doubt that though publicly he disowned his mistress, he secretly watched her interests, or wished her to think that he did so. This is very evident from the fact that the groom of the bedchamber complains that Lord Taaffe "tells hir your Majestie has nothing more in consideratione than hir sufferings, and that the next monny you can gett or borrow shall be sent to supply hir. Whyle your Majestie encourages anny to speake this language shee'le never obey what you will have. The only way is to necessitat hir, if your Majestie can think hir worth your care." ¹

¹ Thurloe State Papers, vol. i. p. 684.



LUCY WALTER



LUCY WALTER



Lucy at length was shipped off to England with an annuity of £400, being accompanied by her two children, her maid, her brother, and Colonel Thomas Howard. She had a meeting with Charles previous to her departure either at Antwerp or Brussels, when he presented her with a pearl necklace valued at about fifteen hundred pounds. Lodgings were procured in the vicinity of Somerset House over a barber's shop, but the movements of the Dutch widow, as she gave herself out to be, were watched with suspicion, and at last she was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower as a spy. Upon examination she said she had come to England to look after some money that had been left her by her mother. She had met Howard at Flushing by accident, she had not seen Charles for a couple of years, and the two children she had with her were by a husband she had in Holland who was dead. After the detention of about a fortnight, Cromwell issued an order to send away Charles Stuart's "lady of pleasure and the young heir and set them on shoar in Flanders, which is no ordinary courtesie."¹

In August the party were back again in Brussels, Lucy, or Mrs. Barlow, as she was usually called, creating fresh disturbances. Howard this time was anxious to get some documents which he had entrusted in her keeping out of her possession, as in the event of his succeeding to the earldom their production might go against his interests. The Colonel and a kinsman

¹ Ellis's Original Letters, 2nd series, vol. iii. p. 352.

of his sweetheart, in trying to settle this little difficulty, came to blows, and the former received a dangerous wound in his arm. Colonel Slingsby, with a view to getting the boy out of her keeping, had lodged the mother and son in his house, but Lucy objected to this arrangement and escaped, whereupon Slingsby had recourse to violence, and attempted to drag the latter off to prison. Public sympathy, as is nearly always the case, sided with the pretty woman, so, the aggressor being worsted, Lucy and her child were taken to the residence of the Ambassador, pending the King's pleasure.

The unfortunate Charles, being again dragged into the mire, explained that it was his desire that the mother and son should be separated, as it would be a charity to them both. His orders were to get the child "in a quiet way," but he regretted that the attempt had been made with such noise and scandal. Further, it was pointed out that if the mother "shall not at length return to such a way of life as may redeem in some measure the reproach of her past ways: if she consents not to this she will add to her follies a most unnatural one in reference to her child, since neither of them will any further be cared for or owned by the King, who will take any good office done to her as an injury to him. It ought to be considered whether she should not be compelled to be good to herself, or at least be restrained from ruining her innocent child by making a property of him to support herself in those

wild and disgraceful courses she hath taken, and whether, from the condition of the parties concerned, the King may not reasonably pretend to a more than ordinary compliance with his desires ; but if he cannot have the child disposed of according to his directions, he will free himself the best way he may from any further trouble or scandal." Lucy, a close prisoner in the Ambassador's house, agreed to comply to these wishes so long as Slingsby or O'Neale should not have the care of her boy.

It was now that the suggestion was made of getting the papers out of her hands, and the King's confidant, Progers, managed with strategy what Slingsby had failed to do with force. Clever persuasion or bribery induced Lucy to go in search of the compromising documents, and when they were forthcoming her boy had vanished.¹ This happened in December, 1657. In the following August Cromwell's secretary was informed by a spy of a "combat" between Bishop Lloyd² and Madame Barlow. The unfortunate prelate "got the wors and is gon for Holland," says the informant with tantalising brevity.³ It may be presumed that the "combat" was about "young Master Jocky," as the future Duke of Monmouth was nicknamed ; or possibly in connection with the marriage ceremony

¹ Add MSS. 28094, f. 71.

² One of the seven Bishops who were sent to the Tower in 1688.

³ Thurloe State Papers, vol. vii. p. 337.

which she declared had been performed. Lloyd, being the King's chaplain, whatever he may have known, undoubtedly took the wisest course in flight.

Once free of his sad environment the handsome boy found a careful foster-mother in Queen Henrietta Maria, through whose influence, aided by Clarendon and Ormonde, the termination of her son's unfortunate liaison had in a great measure been brought about. Dr. Stephen Goffe was appointed the lad's tutor, but he being a Roman Catholic, Thomas Ross, a Scotchman, afterwards, by the King's desire, took his place, and Lord Crofts was appointed as his guardian, and from this time forward he assumed the name of James Crofts.

Of his half-sister Mary very little is known. One loses sight of her upon the mother's return from England in 1656 until the date of her (Mary's) marriage, some fourteen years afterwards, to William Sarsfield, of Mayo, elder brother to Patrick, Earl of Lucan. Her husband brought her to England from the house of Lord Taaffe, her father, who presumably had had her brought up under his care.¹ Notwithstanding that Mary's arrival in the world was the cause of the first breach in the amorous relations between Charles and Lucy Walter, it is one of the many examples of his good nature that he should have made her an allowance. It is also a good trait in Monmouth's character that he should have interested himself in his sister's

¹ State Papers, Dom. Charles II., vol. 434.

welfare, for at the time of her marriage the Duke's influence induced the King to arrange for the purchase of lands at Lucan that a suitable jointure might be settled upon her.

Sarsfield, however, died in 1675 without leaving any provision for his wife, and the following year she was united to William Fanshawe, Master of the Requests to Charles II., who converted her from the Roman Catholic faith, in which she had been brought up. The pair fell upon evil days. Fanshawe lost his appointment, and his wife's "bounty" got into arrears like the most of the pensions of "the Merry Monarch." In a letter from Mary to the Secretary of State preserved in the Record Office, she complains of the non-payment of her one hundred pounds a quarter, which she says is "not ner so much as he [the King] was pleased to alowe me when I was but a child," which shows that Charles provided liberally for her also in those days.

After the King's death we find Mary and her husband again in distress, they and their five children being threatened to be turned out of doors for not paying their rent. James, who naturally had no love for any of the Monmouth connection, disbursed a small sum from the Secret Service Fund, but the Queen of William III., who no doubt had interested herself in Lucy Walter's daughter in Holland, was far more liberal, presenting her with 250 guineas and settling £300 a year upon her husband, who when he

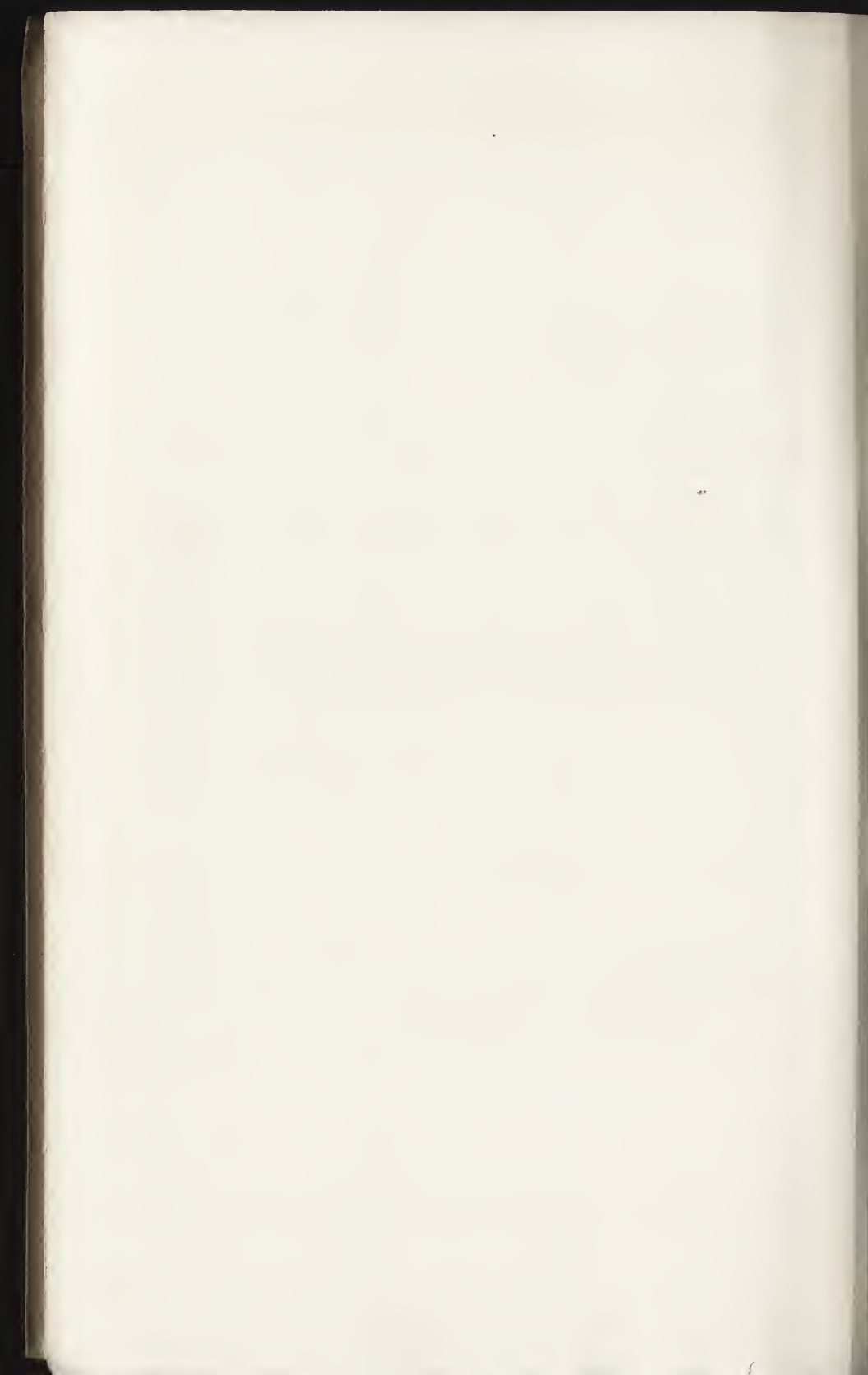
became a widower a few years later was again in difficulties—arrested for debt and crippled with gout. He died after August 26, 1707. His will, bearing that date, desired that his body might be interred at Barking, by the side of his beloved wife, “sister of the late Duke of Monmouth.” By her first husband Mary had two sons, who died young, and a daughter, Charlotte, who survived her step-father, and married a Mr. Agmondisham Vesey, of Ireland. Her step-sister Mary Anne (the third daughter of the second marriage) also married an Irish gentleman, Mr. Mark Newdigate. There were two other daughters, Anne Dorothy, who married a barrister named Mathews, and Lucy Catherine, who was buried at Barking in 1705. The son, Thomas Edward, of Great Singleton, Lancashire, at this time was a volunteer in Her Majesty’s Fleet.¹

To return to Lucy Walter, deprived of royal favour and separated from her beloved son, the authorities at Brussels, who before had threatened to expel her from the town “as an infamous person by sound of drum,” probably did not stand long upon ceremony, as it was only out of consideration for Charles that they had not got rid of her before. In any case, she was living in Paris, having, says James, abandoned herself to a vicious way of living when her brief career came to an end. The diarist Evelyn, who had frequently

¹ See “Sandford,” who, however, is incorrect in the date of the father’s death.



JAMES, DUKE OF MONMOUTH



seen her in that city, says she died miserably, without anything to bury her. The King's cupbearer, William Erskine, who took pity on her during her last days, officiated at her interment, which probably was in the Huguenot Cemetery in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, in October or November, 1658.

Lucy's next-of-kin was Anne Busfield, an aunt ; her father, mother, and two brothers having predeceased her. Though there are still representatives of other branches of the Walter family in the vicinity of Haverfordwest, the male line from Lucy's father ended with Joseph, the son of Sir Richard Walter of Rhôsmarket. Sir Richard (who died in 1727) was the grandson of Lucy's second brother Richard, who has been confounded with his father William from the fact that he also had a daughter named Lucy, whom by an error in an old volume of Pembrokeshire descents has been confused with her aunt and described as "Luce married King Charles IInd England."¹ The Walter family and their connections certainly prided themselves on the royal union. Pepys records that after the Restoration a Welshman at Court talked very broadly of the King having been married to his sister, but William Walter, a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber in 1663, was certainly not Lucy's brother, though he may have been a nephew or a cousin, in which case the news of Whitehall was not transmitted quite correctly to the diarist by Alsopp,

¹ "King Monmouth," pp. 5, 6.

the royal brewer.¹ Lucy's elder brother Justus, described as of the Temple, did not live to see the Restoration. It was he who joined his sister on her way to England in 1656.

Of Lucy's aunt, previously mentioned, some curious information may be obtained from the Chancery pleadings of her daughter, Kiffiana Gosfright, at the death of whose father the widow married Thomas Samborne, of Axe Yard. She survived this second husband, and in 1676 tried to enlarge his provision for her by taking possession of a diamond jewel and a bond for £300 while he lay upon his deathbed, the former of which, according to his will, was to be sold and divided among his legatees, of whom his daughter was one.²

It was a member of this family of Samborne (possibly a brother of Thomas), James, an English merchant at Rouen, who when King Charles and Lord Wilmot arrived in that town in disguise after their escape from Worcester fight, vouched for their respectability, provided money and a change of raiment and carried despatches to the Queen-mother in Paris.³

¹ Pepys' Diary, February 22, 1663-64.

² The above information has kindly been provided by a descendant, Mr. F. B. Sanborn, of Massachusetts.

³ "Flight of the King," p. 188.





MARY BEATRICE D'ESTE

MARY OF MODENA

THE anti-Popish demonstrations on Guy Fawkes day of 1673 were more marked than usual owing to James, Duke of York's, second marriage. "This night," says Evelyn, "the youths of the city burnt the Pope in effigy, after they had made procession with it in great triumph, they being displeased at the Duke for altering his religion and marrying an Italian lady."¹

But James's conversion was an old grievance, as he had secretly embraced the Roman Catholic faith some time before. His union, however, with the daughter of the Duke of Modena, the Princess Mary Beatrice D'Este, niece of the Duchess of Mazarin, came as much a surprise to the happy husband as anybody else. "Then I am a married man," his Highness remarked with perfect sang-froid as he turned on his heel, to the French Ambassador who brought the news.

The Earl of Peterborough,² who acted as the Duke's

¹ Evelyn, November 5, 1673.

² Henry Mordaunt, second Earl of Peterborough, b. 1621, ob. 1697.

proxy, had at last brought his difficult mission to a satisfactory conclusion. While reporting upon the comparative charms of Mary D'Este, the Princesses of Neuburg and Wirtemberg, the Duchess de Guise, the Duchess of Innsbruck, and the juvenile niece of Marshal Turenne, Mademoiselle d'Elboeuf, the political weight of each lady was being considered in London. Their respective ages, ranging from thirteen to thirty, was of little consequence, but James being somewhat of a connoisseur in female beauty stipulated that he should have something more presentable than the "Flander's mare" that had been brought from the Continent for Henry VIII. The selected wife was far and away the prettiest of all, but was very averse to have a husband, and his lordship's advances at first seemed hopeless. But there were more weighty difficulties. The Duke not being a declared Catholic a dispensation from the Pope was necessary before an alliance could be made, but as this could not be procured the sanction of Rome had to be dispensed with, and, after much persuasion, the tearful bride was conducted to the altar on September 30, 1673. The new Duchess was but little better resigned to her fate on November 21st following when she could scarcely conceal her repugnance for her royal husband, who went to Dover to receive her. He had told his daughter, the little Princess Mary, that he had found a playmate for her. The Princess was eleven, and her new mother just turned fifteen. Little did the

former think that four years later she also would be crying her eyes out on her marriage day. The diary of her tutor speaks volumes of that little drama. When informed of the match that had been arranged for her, "her Highness wept all that afternoon and the following day." The ceremony was performed a fortnight later, and after the unhappiest of honeymoons she was hurried off to Holland. The young bride was inconsolable at the thought of having to go away, and spent hours weeping in her closet, and no wonder, for the tutor writes on November 15, 1677: "This day the Court began to whisper about the Prince's sullenness or clownishness, that he took no notice of his Princess at the play or balle, nor came to see her at St. James' the day preceding that designed for their departure." On the 19th she bid adieu to Whitehall, still weeping "grievously."¹

But both these marriages, although they began unhappily, turned out well, and two better wives than the two Marys could not be pointed out. A somewhat blasé, cold, and cynical man of forty was scarcely an ideal husband for so young and beautiful a wife as Mary D'Este. "She was," says Peterborough, "tall, and admirably shaped; her complexion was of the last degree of fairness, her hair black as jet; so were her eyebrows and her eyes, but the latter so full of light and sweetness, as they did dazzle and charm too. There seemed given unto them by nature, sovereign

¹ MS. Diary of Dr. Edward Lake.

power—power to kill, and power to save; and in the whole turn of her face which was of the most graceful oval, there were all the features, all the beauty, and all that could be great and charming in any human creature.”¹ Lady Vaughan says she had more wit and as much beauty as ever woman had before.² Naturally cheerful, good natured and obliging, the new Duchess soon became a favourite, and her youthful freshness and enthusiasm gave new zest to the amusements at Court. The novelty and gaiety at Whitehall suited her natural vivacity, and she entered heart and soul into the prevalent fashion of donning disguises and going incognito to Bartholomew Fair and other popular resorts. The recreations of the dukes and duchesses often strike one as being particularly juvenile.

We get a glimpse of these things from Lady Chaworth's pen in December, 1676. “The Duchess,” she says, “is much delighted with making and throwing of snowballs, and pelted the Duke soundly with one the other day, and ran away quick into her closet and he after her, but she durst not open the doore. She hath also great pleasure in one of those sledges which they call Trainias, and is pulled up and downe the ponds in them every day, as also the King, which are counted dangerous things, and none can drive the horse which draws them about but the Duke of Monmouth, Mr. Griffin, and Mr. Godolphin, and a fourth whose name

¹ Mordaunt Genealogies. Strickland's “Queens of England,” vol. vi. p. 36.

² Lady Russell's Letters.



MARY BEATRICE D'ESTE



I have forgot.”¹ Undignified as these frolics were the Duchess’s position was much more so when, returning from a visit to the Duke of Buckingham at Cliveden, the coachman was so drunk that he overturned the vehicle, and the Princess Anne and her Aunt Henrietta Hyde had their faces bruised, and her Royal Highness the Duchess was disfigured by a swollen nose.”²

Marie D’Este’s aunt, the Duchess of Mazarin, naturally was her chosen companion. She used to play romping games with her, and when she was indisposed she would sit by her bedside the whole day and amuse her with her pranks. The old Marquis de Rouvigny, writing to Monsieur de Pomponne in 1676, was shrewd enough to observe that upon these occasions the King’s kindly visits to his sister-in-law were more for the purpose of meeting the beautiful adventuress than anything else.

Princess Anne was then too young to form a just conception of her stepmother’s character, and if we had had her opinion then it would probably have been a very favourable one. But when Anne was twenty-three and her former playmate Queen of England, things were viewed in a different light.

“The Queen, you must know, is of a very proud and haughty humour,” she writes to her sister Mary, “and though she pretends to hate all form and ceremony, yet one sees that those who make their Court that way, are

¹ Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 12, App. pt. ii. p. 34.

² Ibid., pt. ii. p. 52.

very well thought of. She declares always that she loves sincerity, and hates flattery, but when the grossest flattery in the world is said to her face she seems exceedingly well pleased with it. It really is enough to turn one's stomach to hear what things are said to her of that kind, and to see how mightily she is satisfied with it. All these things Lady Sunderland has in perfection to make her court to her: she is now much oftener with the Queen than she used to be. It is a sad and a very uneasy thing to be forced to live civilly, and as it were freely, with a woman that one knows hates one, and does all she can to undo everybody, which she certainly does.

“One thing I must say of the Queen, which is, that she is the most hated in the world of all sorts of people; for everybody believes that she presses the King to be more violent than he would be himself, which is not unlikely, for she is a very great bigot in her way, and one may see that she hates all Protestants. All ladies of quality say that she is proud, that they don't care to come oftener than they must needs, just out of mere duty; and indeed she has not so great Court as she used to have. She pretends to have a great deal of kindness for me; but I doubt it is not real, for I never see proofs of it, but rather the contrary.”¹

But we must take into account that the Princess was not too generous in her opinions and inclined to vindic-

¹ Dalrymple's *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 174; quoted in Jesse's "Memoirs of the Stuarts."

tiveness. Her detestation of the Countess of Sunderland, for instance, has probably handed down a rather unjust delineation of her character.

Anne Digby, the beautiful daughter of George, Earl of Bristol, and the wife of Robert Spencer, second Earl of Sunderland, was a clever and intriguing woman, as her correspondence with Henry Sidney clearly shows. Both Barillon and Bonrepos expressed themselves very clearly in their letters to Louis XIV. of the intimacy which existed between the Countess and "handsome Sidney." On the other hand, Evelyn was not one to pass lightly over anything discreditable in a woman. He had the highest opinion of her good qualities. Her kindness of heart may be seen in her letters to him and other friends, whose sufferings when sick she was always anxious to relieve. One of her recipes is too funny to pass over unnoticed, viz.: to sit in scalding hot milk and drink candy posset!¹

Evelyn did not think equally high of her husband, the crafty and ambitious Secretary of State, although he does not express his opinion quite as candidly as Princess Anne.

"Lady Sunderland plays the hypocrite more than ever," she writes; "for she is at church half an hour before other people come, and half an hour after everybody is gone, at her private devotions. She runs from church to church after the famousest preachers, and keeps such a clatter with her devotion that it really

¹ "Diary and Times of Henry Sidney," vol. i. p. lxiii.

turns one's stomach. Sure there never was a couple so well matched as she and her good husband; for as she is the greatest jade that ever was, so is he the subtillest workingest villain that is on the face of the earth."

To return to James II.'s Queen, Bishop Burnet tells us as long as she was Duchess she was a universal favourite and did not meddle in State affairs, but occasionally "a satirical temper broke out too much." Her husband's infidelities probably did not sweeten her disposition. Neither of his acknowledged mistresses, Arabella Churchill (the Duke of Marlborough's sister) and Catherine Sedley (Sir Charles Sedley's daughter) were at all remarkable for their good looks. Charles II. "once said," says Burnet, "he believed his brother had his mistresses given him by his priests for penance." In 1680 it was more especially the second lady who was a thorn in the side of the young Duchess. Lady Sunderland records that she was very melancholy owing to "Mrs. Sedley." But when the lady received a title just a year after the King's accession, the Queen openly showed her resentment. Evelyn notes that when the distinction of Countess of Dorchester had passed the Privy Seal on January 19, 1686, the Queen took it "very greivously, so as for two dinners, standing near her, I observed she hardly eat one morsel, nor spake one word to the King or to anybody about her, though at other times she used to be extremely pleasant, full of discourse and good humour."¹ Whether the Countess

¹ Evelyn's Diary.



ANNE DIGBY, COUNTESS OF SUNDERLAND



of Peterborough championed the new Countess's cause or not it would be interesting to know, but her Majesty, on February the 6th following, was still so much perturbed in mind as to box her ladyship's ear.¹ The same month the mistress received orders to depart, with a liberal allowance from the privy purse.²

Bishop Kennet's account of the Queen's treatment of the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth when he was brought a captive to Whitehall and pleaded for his life is not verified by any other contemporary document. After the King had made him sign a paper declaring his illegitimacy, "James's Queen," writes Kennet, "is said to have insulted him in a very arrogant and unmerciful manner; so that when the Duke saw there was nothing designed by this interview but to satisfy the Queen's revenge he rose up from his Majesty's feet with a new air of bravery, and was carried back to the Tower."³ But it is very doubtful whether the Queen was present on this painful occasion. The Duke certainly wrote her a long letter praying for her intercession,⁴ but in all probability he was not admitted into her presence.

Marie D'Este's amiable disposition no doubt was soured by ill-health; probably the English climate was in a great measure responsible, for the winter months usually found her in a very weak state.⁵ The fact also

¹ Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 12, App. pt. ii. p. 103.

² For some particulars of her retirement, *vide* "Secret Chambers," pp. 215-219. ³ Kennet, ed. 1719, vol. iii. p. 432.

⁴ "King Monmouth," p. 325.

⁵ Burnet's "History of his Own Time."

that until the year that James abdicated there was no male heir to the throne caused her considerable anxiety. The babies that she had had died prematurely, and when at last she became the happy mother of a son, the enemies of the Court conspired in ridiculing the idea and circulated the report that a hoax had been played. To the notorious warming-pan story Prince James Frederick Edward and his son, the "Bonny Prince," owed their title "Pretenders." Even six years before, when the Duchess of York had a daughter, the anti-Catholics were quite prepared to circulate a similar fabrication. This is proved by a curious contemporary document. "If it had pleased God to give his Royal Highness the blessing of a son," says the *Observer* for August 23, 1682, "as it proved a daughter, you were prepared to make a Perkin of him. To what end did you take so much pains else, by your instruments and intelligences, to hammer it into the people's heads that the Duchess of York was not with child? And so, in case of a son, to represent him as an impostor; whereas, you have now taken off the mask in confessing the daughter. I would have the impression of this cheat sink so far into the heads and hearts of all honest men, as never to be effaced or forgotten. For we must expect that the same flam shall at any time hereafter, be trumped up again upon the like occasion."

The secrecy of the Queen prior to her confinement in 1688 only furthered the ends of her enemies. To be

suspected of such imposition naturally raised her disgust. Her explanation was that she "scorned to satisfy those who could entertain such thoughts of her."¹

Little wonder that such things should embitter a generous nature.

The Queen, being a devoted wife, shared her husband's inherited high notions of kingly authority, and his prejudices also. The haughtiness of which she is accused probably was only acquired by her wish to act in accordance with James's views. The anecdote is related that one day, as Duchess of York, refusing to sit down to table on terms of equality with the gallant General Dalziel, the old soldier reminded her that he had dined at a table at which her father had stood behind his back.²

Marie, upon several occasions when in a very precarious state of health, had insisted rather in sharing her husband's misfortunes than studying her own comforts. When the revolutionary clouds were gathering overhead James had arranged to send his Queen for safety, first to Cowdray House, in Sussex, and afterwards to Titchfield House, Hants (whither, it will be remembered, his father had fled after his escape from Hampton Court),³ there to await an opportunity of obtaining a vessel at Portsmouth. The disturbances, however, in the town, and the mistrust the King had

¹ Lady Russell's Letters.

² Jesse's "Memoirs of the Stuarts."

³ "Memoirs of the Martyr King."

of those English nobles who remained loyal, upset these plans. Preserving strict secrecy, James next called into his service for the transmission of the Queen two gentlemen from the Court of France, Monsieur de Saint-Victor and the Count de Lauzun, who had recently come over to England to volunteer their help. Lauzun had been in disgrace in his own country for some considerable time owing to his secret marriage with Louis XIV.'s cousin, the Duchess de Montpensier. But his gallantries and ambitious schemes had been cooled by a long term of imprisonment, and "La Grande Mademoiselle" had outgrown her infatuation, the romance of which had been somewhat damped when, one day returning from hunting, her lord had commanded so lofty a person to pull off his boots! His love of adventure made his secret mission, confided to him by James, a very acceptable one.

Only at the last moment was the Queen apprised of the plan to carry her to France. With tears she implored that she might remain and share her husband's troubles. But everything was in readiness, and James was inflexible. A fond embrace, and the mother and her babe were hurried into a boat which was waiting for her at the river steps leading to Chiffinch's "spy office." To be awakened out of one's sleep and rowed in an open boat to the Surrey side an hour or so after midnight in mid-December, and in a hurricane of wind and rain, must have been an



ANNE MARIE LOUISE D'ORLEANS,
DUCHESS DE MONTPENSIER



PRINCESS LOUISA MARIA THERESA STUART



unpleasant experience enough. But her trials did not end here, for the unfortunate Queen had to tramp in the dark through the mud a considerable distance to an obscure inn where Lauzun had engaged a coach. But, as luck would have it, the fugitives had to wait some time while it was being got ready. Afraid of being recognised, the Queen remained in the courtyard in the drenching rain. This aroused the ostler's curiosity, and he was advancing towards her with a lantern when Riva, Lauzun's valet, had the presence of mind to stumble, as if accidentally, up against him, and knock the light out of his hand, which was extinguished, and her Majesty, in the confusion, managed to avoid him.¹ At last the coach was ready, and the Queen, with the little Prince of Wales, the nurse, another French maid, and Lauzun got inside, while Riva took his place on the box-seat next the coachman, Saint-Victor bringing up the rear on horseback. "They had relays of horses as far as Gravesend," enters the Marquis of Dangeau in his "Memoirs" on December 23, 1688, "where they embarked on board a yacht belonging to M. de Lauzun : the captain did not know who his passengers were, and even M. de Lauzun, who had with him an Englishman to explain the commands issued by the captain of the yacht, was ordered by the King of England to poinard him in case he should wish

¹ There are several versions of the story. Père Orleans says the Queen waited for the coach under shelter of the walls of Lambeth Church.

to make any manœuvres contrary to their intention, of landing at Calais or at some other French port. Saint-Victor, who had all along been in the secret, had followed the coach alone upon horseback. Lord Powis and his lady had preceded them, and joined the Queen in the yacht, in which the Queen was hidden in the hold, carrying the Prince of Wales in her arms, like a parcel of dirty linen. The child never cried, neither in the coach nor in the yacht; all was conducted in the happiest and most admirable manner." The Count de Lauzun was doubly rewarded for his successful journey by being received once more into Louis's favour when he reached France.

We have dealt elsewhere with James's subsequent departure from Whitehall, and of his rough handling at Faversham.¹ Dangeau gives minute details of the warm reception accorded to James and his Queen by the Grand Monarque, and of the elaborate Court etiquette of the occasion.

Marie D'Este, like Henrietta Maria, was keenly interested in politics, and after James's abdication is said to have exerted herself in the Stuart cause more than her husband did himself. But her counsels were less dangerous, and her husband, though dreadfully bigoted, was not so weak as his father. His misfortunes, in a great measure, were attributable to his own obstinacy. The Queen is known to have deplored

¹ "Secret Chambers and Hiding Places."

many of his unwise actions, and in particular the placing of Father Petre in the Privy Council.

Of the Princess Isabella, who died at the age of four in 1680, there is a portrait by Lely in the Private Dining-room at Hampton Court, representing the little lady with a wreath of flowers on her head and her hands fondling a lamb. Of the Princess Louisa Maria Theresa, who was born at Saint-Germain in 1692 and died in her twentieth year, there is a portrait at St. John's College, Oxford. The latter is by no means a fine work of art, but one can recognise a strong likeness to her mother. In a miniature of her at Montagu House she is remarkably like her brother, the Chevalier de St. George.¹ She seems to have been universally beloved, and was a great favourite both with Louis XIV. and Madame de Maintenon. The

¹ See his portrait by Alexis Siméon Belle, in the National Portrait Gallery, where is also a portrait of brother and sister, by Largillière, painted in 1695. Neither Prince James Francis Edward, his son the "Bonny" Prince, and the latter's brother, Henry Stuart, Cardinal York, had the characteristic Stuart nose, although when young, Prince James was considered like his father. Sir Godfrey Kneller, who should be a judge, remarked in his characteristic language: "His fader and moder have sate to me about 36 time apiece, and I know every line and bit in their faces. Be Got, I could paint King James just now by memory. I say the child is so like both that there is not a feature in his face but wat belongs either to fader or moder, this I'm sure of, and be Got, I cannot be mistaken. Nay, the nails of his fingers are his moder's, the Queen that was."—Hearne's "Letters by Eminent Persons," vol. ii. pp. 137, 138.

latter speaks of her cheerfulness and amiability, and says that she and her mother were devotedly attached to one another. The exiled Queen outlived her daughter six years, and died at Saint-Germain in 1718, seventeen years after the death of her husband. Her coffin plate, now in the British Museum, has upon it the following inscription: "Cest le corps de tres haute, tres puissante, tres excellen^{te} Princesse Marie Eleonor dest veuve de tres haut, tres puissante et tres exc^{llent} Prince Jacques II. Roy de la Grande Bretagne decedee a St. Germain en laye le 7^e May, 1718."¹

There are numerous portraits of Mary of Modena in existence. There is no mistaking the rather thin, melancholy face, the full lips, and the large, expressive brown eyes which inspired poets when she first made her appearance in England. Yet, strange to say, one of these at Hampton Court for many years passed for, and is still misnamed on the frame, "Nell Gwyn."² Two of the finest portraits of her are the one by Lely at Althorp, and a superb full length by Kneller at Dalkeith Palace.

¹ The plate was given to the Museum, 1878, by Major-General Meyrick.

² We do not refer to the full length of her by Kneller in William III.'s Presence Chamber.





BARBARA VILLIERS, COUNTESS OF CASTLEMAINE

THE COUNTESS OF CASTLEMAINE

PROBABLY no beautiful woman has ever been painted so much as the fascinating Barbara Villiers, of whom that excellent gossip, Pepys, is so enthusiastic. We do not, of course, allude to her personal adornment when slightly *passé*, but to the innumerable picture-frames from which her ladyship looks out with somewhat supercilious gaze. They are legion, notwithstanding the many ancestral mansions which have been destroyed by fire within two centuries or more. No picture-gallery of any pretensions could be complete without this Court favourite. Lady Castlemaine was the fashion, and artists, good and indifferent, either painted from the life, or copied until the features of this luxurious creature must have palled upon them. No wonder that the demands upon Sir Peter Lely's brush compelled that fashionable portrait-painter to keep in hand a stock of canvases, finished in all respects minus the head, and as his royal patron's fancy went so were they filled in. But for every lesser-known beauty who formed one of his subjects, surely there were a dozen Lady Castlemaines.

But the similarity of the heads and arms and attitudes was not the painter's only weak point, for so strikingly alike are many of his faces that one might almost believe he kept a reserve supply of heads to be adjusted when business was exceptionally brisk. The secret probably lies in the fact that soon after the Restoration, when Castlemaine's beauty set the fashion, imitation was the sincerest flattery both to her and to the Court painter's other clients.

We can picture pompous Mr. Pepys' visit to the painter in the Piazza, Covent Garden, in October, 1662. "He came forth to us, but believing that I come to bespeak a picture, he prevented us by telling us, that he should not be at leisure these three weeks—and then to see in what pomp his table was laid for himself to go to dinner ; and here among other pictures, saw the so much desired by me picture of my Lady Castlemaine, which is a most blessed picture and that that I must have a copy of."¹ Again at the famous engraver, Faithorne's, "did see my Lady Castlemayne's picture done by him from Lilly's, in red chalke and other colours—the finest thing I ever saw in my life." The copper-plate was not completed then (Nov. 7, 1666), but a month later Pepys paid him another visit, and went home in the highest spirits with "three of my Lady Castlemayne's heads."

One encounters this seventeenth-century syren in innumerable characters : as a shepherdess, as St.

¹ Diary, October 20, 1662.

Catherine, as Britannia, as Mary Magdalen, as a Madonna, as Venus pure and simple, and many other disguises. And now, having prefaced her importance, let us look into her history.

Barbara's father, William Villiers, second Viscount Grandison, son of the great Duke of Buckingham's half-brother, Sir Edward Villiers, fell fighting for the King at the siege of Bristol, and upon his third desperate attempt to capture the fort he received his death-wound. Among the portraits of his contemporaries collected by his friend, Lord Clarendon, Vandyck's brush reveals him to us much as he is described, as a straight-forward and valorous man. The Lord Chancellor further said he was a pattern of virtue at Court, but in this particular his daughter certainly did not take after her sire. Perhaps she inherited her amorous disposition from her mother, Mary, the daughter of the first Viscount Bayning, who, when she became a widow, married her first husband's kinsman, Charles Villiers (nephew of the first Duke of Buckingham), and when he died, one Arthur Gorges, of Chelsea.

Barbara, who was in her third year (her mother then being only eighteen) at the time of her father's death, was probably educated in London, where, before she was seventeen, a mutual attachment had sprung up between her and the young Earl of Chesterfield, some seven years her senior. This handsome young spark, who had just succeeded to the title, according to Count

Gramont had "a very agreeable face, and a fine head of hair," which assertion is verified by a charming miniature now at Montagu House. He was quite a Don Juan, as may be gathered from a letter-book of his that was discovered in the old residence of the Pulteneys in the early part of the last century, for his devotion appears to have been divided among several ladies at the same time. But Barbara had the same fickle nature; indeed, her amorous inclinations had become conspicuous when she was quite a little girl, and Harry Killigrew incautiously recounting this fact in after years was banished from the Court.¹

His lordship, from the solitudes of his seat in Derbyshire, writes the following effusion in the year 1656:—

"MADAM,—Cruelty and absence have ever been thought the most infallible remedies for such a distemper as mine, and yet I find both of them so ineffectuall that they make mee but the more incurable; seriously, madam, you ought at least to afford some compassion to one in so desperat a condition, for by only wishing mee more fortunat you will make mee so. Is it not a strang magick in love, which gives so powerfull a charme to the least of your cruel words, that they indanger to kill a man at a hundered miles distance; but why doe I complaine of so pleasant a death, or repine at those sufferings which

¹ Pepys' Diary, October 21, 1666; see also Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 7, App. p. 485.

I would not change for a diadem? No, madam, the idea I have of your perfections is too glorious to be shadowed either by absence or time; and if I should never more see the sun, yet I should not cease from admiring his light; therefore do not seek to darken my weak sense by endeavoring to make me adore you less;

“For if you decree that I must die,
 Fading is nobler, than retiring
 And in the glory of aspiring
 It is brave to tumble from the sky.”

Judging from a letter from Barbara in the following year, she seems to have been equally infatuated, and by no means had attempted to cool his lordship's ardour. “I would fain have had the happiness,” she says, “to have seen you at church this day, but I was not suffered to go. I am never so well pleas'd as when I am with you, though I find you are better when you are with other ladies; for you were yesterday all the afternoon with the person I am most jealous of, and I know I have so little merit that I am suspicious you love all women better than my selfe. I sent you yesterday a letter that I think might convince you that I loved nothing besides your selfe, nor will I ever, though you should hate me; but if you should, I would never give you the trouble of telling you how much I loved you, but keep it to my selfe till I had broke my hart.” Again she writes: “It is ever my

ill fortune to be disappointed of what I most desire, for this afternoon, I did promis to myselfe the satisfaction of your company : but I feare I am disappointed, which I assure you is no small affliction to mee ; but I hope the faits may yet be so kind as to let me see you about five a clock ; if you will be at your private lodgings in Lincoln's Inn Fields I will endeavour to come." While these letters were passing to and fro, the fascinating Earl had lost part of his susceptible heart to one of the five daughters of the second Duke of Hamilton (the gallant cavalier who fell at Worcester fight). Count Gramont says the Lady Anne, afterwards Countess of Southesk, was "naturally inclined to tenderness." But Barbara, who was naturally jealous, does not appear to have been upset by any feeling of rivalry. "My friend and I," she writes to her admirer, "are just now abed together a contriving how to have your company this afternoure. If you deserve this favour, you will come and seek us at Ludgate Hill about three a clock, at Butler's shop, where wee will expect you."

After this, the suspicions of the widowed Duchess were in some way aroused. "My Lord, I come just now for the Duchess of Hambleton," writes Barbara (1657), "and there I found to my great affliction that the Lady Ann was sent to Windsor, and the world sayes that you are the occation of it. I am sorry to hear that the having a kindness for you is so great a crime that people are to suffer for it. The discourses

of the world," she says in another letter (1657), "must make mee a little more circumspect—the joy I had of being with you the last night has made me doe nothing but dream of you, and my life is never pleasant to mee but when I am with you or talking of you."

Two years after this Barbara became the wife of Roger Palmer, the second son of Sir James Palmer of Dorney Court, Bucks. He was her senior by six years, and at the time a student of the Inner Temple. It was a marriage of convenience as far as she was concerned, as he was the heir to a large fortune. Two letters to her old lover the very same year of this union clearly show how her affections had been compromised. "Since I saw you," she says, "I have been at home, and I find the *mounser* [presumably her husband] in a very ill humour, for he sayes that he is resolved never to bring mee to town againe, and that nobody shall see me when I am in the country. I would not have you come to-day, for that would displease him more: but send mee word presently what you would advise me to doe, for I am ready and willing to goe all over the world with you, and I will obey your commands that as whilst I live.—Yours, &c." And the following: "My Dear life, I have been this day extreamly ill, and the not hearing from you hath made mee much worse than otherwayes I should have been. The doctor doth believe mee in a desperat condition, and I must confess that the unwillingness I have to leave you makes me not intertaine the thoughts of

deathe so willingly as otherwise I should : for there is nothing besides yourselfe that could make me desire to live a day and if I am never so happy as to see you more, yet the last words I will say shall be a praire for your happyness, and so I will live and dey loving you above all other things."

The smallpox fortunately departed without leaving any signs of its ravages, but as the above is the last of Barbara's affectionate epistles, and as Chesterfield's replies read as if they were wanting in real sympathy, and as if his lordship excused himself from coming to town, the illness probably broke off the liaison. But a duel which he had fought, and in which he had killed his adversary,¹ rendered it advisable that he should keep in seclusion for a time. His correspondence shows that he was in England for some months afterwards, for Barbara's letter referring to her husband must have been written after her marriage on April 14th, and the subsequent one also, as it is endorsed "from Mrs. Palmer." According to Jesse,² Palmer and his wife left England in 1659 to join the Court of the exiled King in the low countries : the husband making himself acceptable by loans of money, the wife by her personal charms. Chesterfield also went to Holland and Flanders, and after stopping at the Court of the Queen-mother in Paris, joined

¹ Pepys' Diary, January 17, 1659.

² "Memoirs of the Court of England," 1855 ed., vol. iii. p. 183.



BARBARA VILLIERS, COUNTESS OF CASTLEMAINE.



Charles on his way to Dover in May, 1660. It therefore seems not improbable that Barbara may have induced her spouse to go abroad, that she might be near the lover with whom she was so infatuated. Be this as it may, they certainly never met, for it was when the Earl was at Bourbon, in the early part of the year 1660, he heard rumours of her intimacy with the King. "My letters," he writes to her, "have, equally with my thoughts, attended you from all the considerable parts of my journey, and when compassion or gratitude has possibly obliged you to make a return, I have thought all my sufferings not meritorious of their repentance. But madam the newse I have from England concerning your ladyship makes me doubt of everything, and therefore let me entreate you to send me your picture, for then I shall love something that is like you, and yet unchangeable, and though it will have no great return of kindness, yet I am sure it will love nobody else better than your very humble servant."

The news that had got to England was verified soon after Charles's triumphal entry into London. Pepys was away on the night of universal rejoicings, and for over a week afterwards says nothing to corroborate Lord Dartmouth's statement that Mrs. Palmer was with the King on May 29th.¹ The diarist's first entry of the future Countess of Castlemaine is on July 13th, when at his noble patron's lodgings in

¹ Burnet's "Own Time," vol. 1. p. 94.

King Street, Westminster, he "was late writing letters : and great doings of music at the next house which was Whallys ; the King and Dukes there with Madame Palmer, a pretty woman that they have a fancy to."

In 1661 we again find Chesterfield writing to his old love, but his inconstancy long before had brought about his disgrace. Perhaps pique may have prompted more ambitious designs, and facilitated Barbara's new triumph with the King. The ex-lover makes many passionate appeals against being banished. His affliction is unbearable owing to her displeasure. He desires only to live on her account, yet all his letters remain unanswered. If she will neither write nor speak to him he will leave the town for ever. There, however, was no response, so his lordship had to seek solace in temporary retirement, or, what was more likely, among his other lady friends. This year Barbara's husband, who must have cut a pitiable figure at Whitehall, was created Earl of Castlemaine and Baron Limerick. The popularity of the new Countess with the King created no little envy among the fair damsels of the alcove and the matted gallery. Our old friend Pepys was never happier than when he caught a glimpse of her at the theatre, or in the Royal Chapel. At the latter, when his thoughts should have been elsewhere, he noted how she flirted with the Duke of York through the curtains which divided the Court ladies from the royal pew ; and at the former the play

was a secondary consideration when she was present, and her ladyship was one to be more flattered than embarrassed when he sat before her and filled his eyes with her as he said he did.¹ Nay, even a glimpse of her laced smocks and linen petticoats which were floating in the breeze one May morning in the Privy Garden, he says did him good.

The arrival of the new Queen from Portugal, as may be imagined, had a very depressing effect upon the Countess. She had no heart to enter into the universal rejoicings. Bonfires were lighted at the doors of most of the citizens' houses to welcome Catherine's arrival, but that of Barbara's lodgings was conspicuous by the absence of one. For a month or so the mistress was slighted by the people, but when it was seen that the King in no way relaxed his attentions, she triumphed, and carried her head as high as ever.

It must not, however, be thought that the Queen submitted to this slight without a struggle, nor that Barbara was without influential enemies. Her kinswoman, Mary Villiers, Duchess of Richmond² (the sister of George, second Duke of Buckingham) com-

¹ Pepys' Diary, July 23, 1661.

² Charles Stuart, fourth Duke of Richmond, who succeeded to the title in 1655, and who married "La Belle Stuart," was her nephew. Mary Villiers, only daughter of the first Duke of Buckingham, married James Stuart, third Duke of Richmond, in 1637. There is a fine portrait of her by Vandyck as St. Agnes at Windsor, a copy of which by Lely was recently sold among the Townshend heirlooms at Christie's.

pared her to her face with Jane Shore, and hoped she would come to the same end.¹ Returning late one night from a visit to the Duchess of York at St. James's Palace, escorted only by a maid and a little page, three masked men suddenly made their appearance and, says Cominges, the French Ambassador, who relates the encounter, "addressed to her the harshest and bitterest reprimand that can well be imagined. They even went so far as to remind her that the mistress of Edward the Fourth died on a dunghill, scorned and abandoned by everybody. You [the letter is addressed to M. de Lionne, October 2, 1664] can well imagine that the time seemed long to her, for the park extends over a larger space than from Regnard's to the Pavilion. As soon as she was in her bedroom she fainted. The King being informed of this, ran to her, caused all the gates to be shut, and all the people found in the park to be arrested. Seven or eight persons who happened thus to be caught were brought in, but could not be identified."²

But of all her enemies Lord Clarendon, once her father's fast friend, was perhaps the bitterest, and the animosity was certainly mutual. Yet he, against his will and conscience, was so awkwardly placed that he had to support the woman whom he despised and ignored.

¹ See Pepys' Diary, April 21, 1662.

² Jusserand's "French Ambassador at the Court of Charles II.," p. 91.

The Chancellor dwells at length upon the delicate negotiations with the Queen, in which he had to champion the cause of one whose character had debarred him from introducing her to his own wife. The King's will was made up, and Clarendon's disgraceful mission was to make the Queen submit to the indignity of receiving the mistress. Notwithstanding the fact that Catherine had erased the name of the Countess from the list of her new household, she was presented a few days later by Charles, who hoped that she would be received with the rest.

The Queen "was no sooner sate in her chair," says Clarendon, "but her colour changed, and tears gushed out of her eyes and her nose bled and she fainted, so that she was forthwith removed into another room, and all the company retired out of that where she was before."¹ Catherine held out resolutely for a time, and the unfortunate Chancellor was trying to mediate matters when the King, out of patience, wrote to him in very decided terms that "lest you may think that by making a farther stir in the business you may divert me from my resolution, which all the world shall never do, and I wish I may be unhappy in this world and in the world to come, if I fail in the least degree of what I am resolved, which is of making my Lady Castlemaine of my wife's bedchamber, and whosoever I find endeavouring to hinder this resolution of mine except

¹ "Continuation of Life of Clarendon," p. 168.

it be only to myself I will be his enemy to the last moment of my life."

And so in time the Queen's scruples gave way, she learned to live down the indignity, and yielding to overpowering odds, received her rival upon a friendly footing.

In mid-July, 1662, Lord and Lady Castlemaine separated, the latter leaving her house in King Street (overlooking the Privy Garden) and going to her uncle's residence,¹ Richmond Palace, carrying with her not only her jewels, plate, and other valuables, but everything else that could be moved; but when she heard that her husband had gone to France she promptly returned with all her goods and chattels. This climax was brought about, not so much owing to the King's attentions, but to a difference of religious opinions over the christening of their second child, Charles Fitzroy, who was created Duke of Southampton in 1674, and succeeded his brother as Duke of Cleveland in 1709. The father being a Roman Catholic, had the child baptized by a priest, but some days after (June 18, 1662) the mother had the ceremony performed again at St. Margaret's, Westminster. Their first child, Anne, born February 25, 1660-61, though acknowledged both by her husband and the King, was by general repute assigned to the Earl of Chesterfield, whom, says Lord Dartmouth, she

¹ Colonel Edward Villiers.



BARBARA VILLIERS, COUNTESS OF CASTLEMAINE



resembled very much both in face and person ;¹ but, judging from the date of birth and the correspondence before quoted, there appears to have been but little foundation for the rumour. Of Anne Fitzroy, afterwards Countess of Sussex, we shall speak presently.

If the Earl of Castlemaine went to France, as was reported, he was back again on August 23rd, the day of the Queen's arrival at Whitehall from Hampton Court. Our friend Pepys, on the roof of the Banqueting House, was delighted with the pageant, but confesses that he was more interested in her ladyship, who stood not far away. "I gluttred myself with looking on her," he says, "but methought it was strange to see her lord and her upon the same place walking up and down without taking notice one of another, only at first entry he put off his hat, and she made him a very civil salute, but afterwards took no notice one of another ; but both of them now and then would take their child, which the nurse held in her armes, and dandle it. One thing more, there happened a scaffold below to fall, and we feared some hurt, but there was none, but she of all the great ladies only run down among the common rabble to see what hurt was done, and did take care of a child that received some little hurt, which methought was so noble. Anon there came one there booted and spurred that she talked long with, and by and by she being in her hair, she put on his hat which was but an ordinary one, to keep the

¹ Burnet's "Own Time."

wind off. But methinks it became her mightily, as everything else do." ¹

About this time the pretty face of Frances Stuart had attracted the King's notice. She had come over with the Queen-mother from France and was appointed Maid of Honour to Queen Catherine. The Countess having full confidence in her own superior attractions, befriended this new beauty, and rather encouraged Charles's attentions than otherwise, only to find a little later on that she had a dangerous rival. During the spring and summer of 1663 there were many rumours of Barbara's waning influence, and while the new favourite was courted on all sides the slighted mistress sought revenge in encouraging fresh admirers, among whom were Henry Jermyn, quite a lady killer by all accounts, Sir Charles Berkeley, one of the King's boon companions, and Colonel James Hamilton, one of his grooms of the bedchamber. Pepys tells us on February 8, 1662-63 that Sir Charles was often seen through her ladyship's bedroom window, but after all, much that he says was only gossip. However, when her second son² made his appearance, it was a long time before the King would acknowledge it to be his.³

Anxious that the public should think she was as

¹ Diary, August 23, 1662.

² Henry Fitzroy, afterwards created Duke of Grafton, born September 20, 1663.

³ Wood's "Athenæ Oxoniensis," vol. ii. p. 270.

much in favour as ever, one day at the play she quitted her own box and coolly seated herself between the King and the Duke of York, much to their annoyance. Privately, however, they were on familiar terms. Charles supped regularly at her new apartments over the Holbein Gateway (which stood at right angles to the Banqueting Hall), and did not disown Charlotte Fitzroy,¹ who made her appearance on September 5, 1664. In the following month our diarist regrets that Lady Castlemaine's beauty is on the decline. Little Stuart meanwhile, who then was only seventeen, daily grew more bewitching, and the King's attention to her more marked daily. He supped with her privately at Lord Arlington's, at which entertainment that nobleman's mistress, Mrs. Scrope, presided. Barbara, in her resentment at being left out in the cold, grew haughty and malicious. "She runs great risks," remarked the French Ambassador, Courtin, "if her anger lasts she may well lose the finest rose on her hat."

Barbara's last child acknowledged by the King was George Fitzroy (afterwards created Duke of Northumberland), born December 28, 1665. There were more quarrels and reconciliations in 1666. The Queen meekly complained that her royal spouse took cold returning so late from the Countess's residence. The latter indignantly repudiated the insinuation by declaring that his Majesty must go elsewhere, where-

¹ Married at the age of ten to the Earl of Lichfield.

upon she was ordered to quit the Court. The disgrace, however, was but temporary, for when she sent from her lodgings in Pall Mall to inquire if she might remove her belongings, Charles sent a message that she had better come and inspect them, whereat she returned, and remained. In that winter £30,000 was paid out of the privy purse to settle her debts, for the large income she received was in no way adequate to her reckless extravagance, not to mention the vast sums which melted at the basset table. In 1679 the Earl of Essex fell into disfavour for refusing to pay over a gift of £25,000 which Lawrence Hyde, in his place, had made no scruple in disbursing.¹ Little wonder when Pepys tells us that she was known to have lost as much as that in a single night.

As the King's affection for her decreased so her tyranny over him held him in subjection. She had now become imperious and vindictive, and the easy-going monarch upon one occasion is said to have gone down on his knees and asked her forgiveness. We get a graphic picture of the King's mistress at the time of the fall of Clarendon in 1667, who, in his "Life," says, "She rose hastily from her noontide bed, and came out into her aviary anxious to read in the saddened air of her distinguished enemy some presage of his fall." The Chancellor's disgrace, says Pepys, "was certainly designed in my Lady Castlemayne's chamber : and that when he went for the King on Monday

¹ Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 7, App. p. 477.

morning she was in bed, though about twelve o'clock, and ran out in her smock into her aviary looking into Whitehall Garden; and thither her woman brought her her nightgown,¹ and stood joying herself at the old man's going away; and several of the gallants of Whitehall, of which there were many standing to see the Chancellor return, did talk to her in her birdcage, among others Blanford² telling her she was the bird of Paradise."³

In this year and the next one hears various reports of Barbara's infidelity, which in a great measure was prompted by jealousy. Young Jermyn, nephew of the Earl of St. Albans, and John Churchill (the future Duke of Marlborough, who was then an ensign and page of honour to the Duke of York), both pose as her lovers. Upon one occasion the first had to creep into a cupboard, and on another the latter had to leap out of a window to escape the wrath of their royal rival. Charles Hart, the actor, too, had his share in her ladyship's affections. Notwithstanding these promiscuous amours it is strange to find her "in a higher command over the King than ever—not as mistress, for she scorns him, but as a tyrant to command him."⁴ Her influence over Charles was certainly greater than he cared to acknowledge. For this reason the French Ambassador,

¹ Dressing-gowns were then so termed.

² Louis de Duras, Marquis de Blanquefort.

³ Pepy's Diary, August 27, 1667.

⁴ *Ibid.*, January 16, 1668-69.

Colbert, who had her in view as a useful political agent, suggested to that clever diplomatist, Louis XIV., that "if handsome gifts are lavished on Madame Castlemaine his Majesty may think that, in spite of his assertions to the contrary, we fancy that she rules him, and take it in bad part."¹ He also adds that the English monarch often said that the only woman who had a hold upon him was his sister. Hence it was that Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans, was entrusted with the diplomatic service which brought her young Maid of Honour, Louise de Keroualle, into prominence to eclipse not only Barbara, but many of her younger rivals. On August 23, 1670, with a lavish pension, the titles of Baroness Nonsuch, Countess of Southampton, and Duchess of Cleveland, were conferred upon her.

In February, 1670-71, we learn from the Belvoir MSS. that her Grace was still conspicuous at Court. At a great ballet her charms were displayed "in a riche petticoat and halfe skirte, and a short man's coat very richly laced, a perwig cravatt and a hat : her hat and maske was very rich."² In the spring of this year she drove in the parks with eight horses and the town said there were to be twelve.³ Her residence was now Cleveland House, St. James's, upon the site of which now stands Bridgewater House, the name being pre-

¹ MS. "Affaires Etrangères," January 14, 1669.

² Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 12, App. pt. v. vol. ii. p. 23.

³ Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 7, App. p. 489.



BARBARA VILLIERS, COUNTESS OF CASTLEMAINE, AND HER SON,
THE DUKE OF GRAFTON



served in Cleveland Row. About the time that she purchased the property we find her old flame, the Earl of Chesterfield, an adept at letter writing like his better known grandson, sending her a figure to adorn a fountain in her grounds—a pathetic emblem of the past.

“Madam,” he writes, “as soon as I came to town I bespoke a figure for your ladyship’s fountain which is a cupid kneeling on a rock and shooting from his bow a stream of water up towards heaven. This may be interpreted by some that tears are the best arms with which that place is to be assaulted ; but my meaning in it is, that your ladyship, not being content with the conquest of one world, doth now by your devotions attack the other. I hope this still hath too much gravity to appear gallant ; since many years agoe your ladyship gave me occasion to repeate these two lines :—

“ ‘ Vous motes tout espoir pour vous, belle inhumaine,
Et pour tout autre que vous ; vous motes tout desir (*sic*).’ ”

By the Test Act of March 20, 1672–73, the Duchess of Cleveland had to resign her position of Lady of the Bedchamber to the Queen. Some months previous to this her youngest daughter, Barbara, was born at Cleveland House (the father of whom was generally believed to be young Churchill), where years afterwards she followed her mother’s example by having an illegitimate son by the Earl of Arran, who as the fourth Duke of Hamilton fell by Lord Mohun’s sword in the

celebrated duel of 1712. Barbara retired to the Priory of St. Nicholas at Pontoise in Normandy, where, after being Prioress for sixteen years, she died in 1737.¹

Her sisters, the Ladies Anne and Charlotte Fitzroy, were married in August, 1674, to Thomas Lennard, fourteenth Lord Dacre (afterwards Earl of Sussex), and to Edward Henry Lee, Earl of Lichfield. The Secret Service expenses of the King show the sum of fifteen hundred odd pounds for his daughters' wedding dresses of gold and silver lace. Charles was much attached to both of them. In a characteristic letter to the younger of the two he writes: "I have had so much business since I came hither that I hope you will not thinke that I have neglected writing to you out of want of kindness to my deare Charlotte. I am going to Newmarket to-morrow, and have a great deal of businesse to despatch to-night. Therefore I will only tell you now that I have five hundred guniyes for you wch. shall be ether delivered to yourselfe, or any who you shall appoint to receive it, and so, my dear Charlotte, be assured that I love you with all my harte, being your kinde father, C. R."²

Little Anne Fitzroy had been educated in France and returned to London two years before her marriage, and the apartments which her mother had occupied at

¹ Her son, Charles Hamilton, lived for some time with his grandmother at Walpole House, Chiswick, and afterwards joined the English Court at Saint-Germain.

² Letter in the possession of Ambrose Lee, Esq.

Whitehall were handed over to her when she became Countess of Sussex. As elsewhere described, the Duchess of Mazarin became her boon companion, having won her affections by entering heart and soul in her childish amusements. Courtin, the French Ambassador, describes how these two inseparables, having dined with him one Sunday, played battledore and shuttlecock in his withdrawing-room for the rest of the afternoon. As time went on the Earl, objecting to the attentions his wife received in her friend's company, carried her into the country; but her spirits drooped, and physicians had to be sent down from London. Lady Chaworth, writing to her brother, Lord Roos, in January, 1676-77, who gives this piece of information, however adds in a later letter "that my Lady Sussex is mightily pleased with fox hunting and hare hunting, but kisses Madame Mazarin's picture with much affection still."¹ Caressing this miniature probably recalled the romantic history of the beautiful Italian, and may have put ideas of rebellion into her head. In any case, the Earl and she lived far from peacefully, and at length separated. The Duchess of Cleveland meanwhile, after compromising herself with the dramatist Wycherley and the actor Goodman, had fresh admirers in Paris, where she principally lived about this time. Among these was the English Ambassador, Ralph Montagu, and the first Gentleman of the Chamber to King Louis, the

¹ Belvoir MSS.

Marquis de Chastillon. Some letters which the latter had received fell into Montagu's hands, who, being both jealous and a mischief maker, revenged himself by informing Charles II. of his discovery.

To justify herself in some measure, the Duchess wrote to the King: "All I have to say for myself is that you know, as to love, one is no mistress of oneself, and that you ought not to be offended at me since all things of this nature is at an end with you and I, so that I could do you no prejudice. I promise you that for my conduct it shall be such as that you nor nobody shall have occasion to blame me, and I hope you will be just to what you said to me, which was at my house when you told me you had letters of mine; you said, 'Madam, all that I ask of you for your own sake is, live so for the future as to make the least noise you can, and I care not who you love.'"¹

After this exposure the Duchess and Montagu naturally were sworn enemies, and matters were made worse by the Ambassador's secret instructions to effect the removal of the young Countess of Sussex, first from the Monastery of Conflans, where her mother had placed her, to the Monastery of the Holy Sepulchre within Paris; and afterwards, if possible, effect her removal back to England.

The mother, ignorant that the King was at the bottom of it, was both mystified and indignant at the extraordinary proceedings of the Ambassador respecting

¹ Harleian MSS., Harris, vol. v. p. 372.

her flighty daughter. She wrote to Charles (May 16, 1678) complaining bitterly of the evident intimacy: "She has never in the monastery two daies together," she writes, "but every day gone out with the Ambassador, and has often layen four daies together at my house and sent for her meat to the Ambassador, he being allwaies with her till five o'clock in y^e morning, they two shut up together alone, and w^d not let any maistre d'hotel wait nor any of my servants, onely the Ambassador's. This made so great a noise at Paris that she is now the holle discours. I am so much afflicted that I can hardly write this for crying, to see that a child that I doated on as I did on her sh^d make so ill a return and join with the worst of men to ruin me."

Charles answered this letter and received the following in reply: "Your Ma^{ty} may be confydent that as she is yours I shall allways have som remains of that kindnes formerly, for I can hate nothing that is yours." The King's letter was sent by the Duchess to her daughter at the before-mentioned religious establishment without Paris, but the letter was returned and an answer given that the Countess of Sussex was ill and could not be seen. The mother thereupon complained to the Archbishop of Paris, after which an interview was permitted with the Duchess's messenger. The young Countess of Sussex was attended by Montagu, who said he had reasons for what he had done, and if the King knew, his resentment would fall, not upon

him, but upon the mother ; he further said that his charge being the King's daughter "it was not fit for her to live with my lady Duchess whoe lead so infamous a life." In the same way young Crofts, the future Duke of Monmouth, was removed from the keeping of his mother, Lucy Walter.

But the Duchess continued her appeals to the King. She objected to the Lady Abbess letting her daughter have her own way, and go out when she liked, and, indeed, by the mother's account, the establishment must have been a very easy-going one. The Ambassador entertained her with "consorts of museke" every day. She had three women to wait on her besides footmen and a Swiss guard "to stand at her parloyer dore."

At length the dispute was settled. The Countess was reconciled with her husband and returned to Whitehall. Before long, however, they again separated, and when James II. abdicated she lived principally with the English Court at Saint-Germain, but on the death of the Earl in 1715, she returned to England and married Henry, eighth Lord Teynham, of Linsted, Kent, where she died in 1722.

Towards the end of the year 1679 the Duchess figures conspicuously at the marriage, or rather re-marriage, of her son, the Duke of Grafton, with Lord Arlington's only daughter (then only twelve years of age). Evelyn, who was a guest at the supper, says the King sat between the Duchess of Cleveland and the



ROGER PALMER,
EARL OF CASTLEMAINE



ISABELLA BENNET, DUCHESS OF GRAFTON



bride. "I was privately invited," he says, "by my lady her mother to be present. I confess I could give her little joy and so plainly told her, but she said the King would have it so, and there was no going back. This sweetest, hopefullest, most beautiful child, and most virtuous too, was sacrificed to a boy that had been rudely bred, without anything to encourage them but his Majesty's pleasure. I pray God the sweet child find it to her advantage, who if my augury deceive me not, will in few years be such a paragon as were fit to make the wife of the greatest prince in Europe." The diarist says he was the handsomest, and Bishop Burnet the most hopeful of Charles's children, but both agree that he was rough and wanting in polish. The Duke, who had fought valiantly on the Royalist side against his half-brother, Monmouth, in 1685,¹ fell at the Siege of Cork, 1690. His wife survived him thirty-two years, having married secondly Sir Thomas Hanmer. Her full-length portrait, by Kneller, forms one of the famous "Hampton Court Beauties" that were painted to rival Lely's equally famous "Windsor Beauties," also at that historic palace.

Of the Duchess of Cleveland little more remains to be said. She had sufficient tact and influence over the King to be a familiar figure at Court with the Duchesses of Portsmouth and Mazarin until the end of his reign. She was present at the well-known Sunday scene in the

¹ *Vide* "King Monmouth."

Gallery at Whitehall, a week before the King's death.¹ Nor did Charles forget to tell his brother to look after her when he was gone.

Upon the death of the Earl of Castlemaine in 1705, she married Major-General Robert (better known as "Beau") Fielding. The ceremony took place in a house in Bond Street where the Duchess was then living, and was solemnised by the Chaplain of the Portuguese Ambassador, in the presence of her jeweller, lawyer, housekeeper, and two maids. Her new husband ill-used her, but, fortunately for her, it was found afterwards that the knot could be untied, as this notorious rake and gamester had previously married two heiresses, one of whom was still living.

Towards the close of the seventeenth century the reduced circumstances of the Duchess would not allow her to continue at Cleveland House. In the Mall at Chiswick may still be seen an old house in excellent preservation, Walpole House. Here the last years of her life were spent, and here she died of dropsy in her sixty-ninth year, on October 9, 1709.² The spirit of the once lovely Barbara is said to haunt a room in the upper part of the building wringing her hands and bemoaning the loss of her beauty, a really unreasonable thing to do, for Kneller's portrait of her (in the

¹ Evelyn's Diary, January 28, 1685.

² She was interred in Chiswick Church close by. Walpole House figures in "Vanity Fair." *Vide* the author's edition of the Memoirs of Count de Gramont.

National Portrait Gallery), as she appeared in Queen Anne's reign, reveals her still as a handsome and buxom widow.¹

¹ This picture used to be named Queen Anne until Viscount Dillon, who possesses a replica, pointed out the mistake. There are three other portraits of her at Ditchley, two by Lely and one by Gascar. By his lordship's courtesy, the former two are reproduced in this volume. The original of the better-looking portrait is a full-length. The other represents the Duchess (as a Madonna) with her son, the little Duke of Grafton. Mrs. Beale, the portrait painter, saw the latter in Baptist May's lodgings at Whitehall in 1677 (*vide* her diary, quoted in Horace Walpole's "Anecdotes of Painting").

THE COUNTESS DE GRAMONT

GRACE, dignity, and haughtiness predominate in Lely's masterpiece, which we are told he took particular pleasure in painting. We see in it more of Dangeau's brief, impartial criticism than the naturally too flattering description dictated to the lady's brother by her husband. We will quote them in turn, and leave the reader to compare the word and brush painting and give his own verdict.

The Countess de Gramont, says the former, had "a most lively wit, the most extensive information, the greatest dignity, the utmost ease, and the most polished elegance at Court. Her haughtiness was tempered by refined and elevated piety, and her good sense was so great that she implanted it in others."

The Count de Gramont is carried away with his enthusiasm. "She had the fairest shape," he says, "the loveliest neck, and the most beautiful arms in the world: she was majestic and graceful in all her movements: and she was the original which all the ladies copied in their taste and air of dress. Her forehead was open, white, and smooth: her hair was well set,



ELIZABETH HAMILTON, COMTESSE DE GRAMONT



and fell with ease into that natural order which it is so difficult to imitate. Her complexion was possessed of a certain freshness, not to be equalled by borrowed colours : her eyes were not large, but they were lively and capable of expressing whatever she pleased : her mouth was full of graces, and her contour uncommonly perfect : nor was her nose, which was small, delicate, and turned up, the least ornament of so lovely a face. In fine, her air, her carriage, and the numberless graces dispersed over her whole person made the Chevalier de Gramont not doubt that she was possessed of every other qualification. Her mind was a proper companion for such a form : she did not endeavour to shine in conversation by those sprightly sallies which only puzzle, and with still greater ease, she avoided that affected solemnity in her discourse which produces stupidity ; for without any eagerness to talk, she just said what she ought and no more." After so glowing a description it seems strange that the beauty's two brothers found it necessary to hurry after the flippant Count, when he had quitted the English Court and was on his way to France, to ask his intentions towards their sister. The interview at an inn in Dover was brief and to the point—the sword's point perhaps. "Chevalier de Gramont," they inquired, "haven't you forgotten something in London?" "Pardon," replied the Count with his usual polish, "I forgot to marry your sister." So the three returned to town and the marriage ceremony was duly solemnised—not

as some writers have it in 1668, but at the close of the year 1663.

As the Count has noticed "that his age is becoming a great obstacle to all his imaginary pleasures," writes the French Ambassador, Cominges, to Louis XIV., "he has resolved to secure for himself more solid ones by marrying. With this view he has cast his eyes on a beautiful young demoiselle of the name of Hamilton, niece to the Duke of Ormonde, adorned with all the grace of virtue and nobility, but so little with mere material wealth that, according to those who give her most, she has none. I think that at first the Chevalier did not mean to go so far in this business, but be it that conversation has completed what beauty began, or that the noise made by two rather troublesome brothers may have had something to do with it, certain it is that he has now declared himself publicly. The King has given his consent, and in consideration of the intended marriage has given hopes of his providing for the board of the lovers by means of some pension or other when he can. As I saw that this marriage was the cause of endless banter at Court, and that everybody talked of it according to his humour, I took upon myself to try and break it, or at least postpone it, but all without success. I see now no remedy to an unavoidable evil, recommended by a blind and performed by a disabled man. He loaded me with a thousand false reasons, which I would not entertain; he received mine in the same way; and time will teach

him which are the best. I wish for his sake it may be his, but it does not seem likely." ¹

And so Elizabeth Hamilton became Countess de Gramont. She had had many admirers, but the wit and vivacity of the Frenchman evidently was more to her liking than his younger and vainer English rivals. A love of practical joking was common to both, and may unwittingly have drawn them together. But in another respect they were widely different, the Count was an unprincipled libertine, while she was one of the few virtuous and high minded women whose names stand out conspicuously in such a Court of lax morality.

Among those who became enslaved with her charms was the King's brother, whose intentions towards the fair sex generally, that is to say, the young and pretty ones, at this period were always regarded with suspicion. He did his utmost to make himself agreeable, but might have saved himself the pains, as Miss Hamilton was one with whom one could not trifle in such matters. One can see from her portrait the sort of reception those would receive who were not acceptable. She could have become, by marriage, Duchess of Richmond or Duchess of Norfolk, had she felt so disposed, or Baroness Dover, or Countess of Falmouth, none of them insignificant marriages for a knight's daughter. Richard Talbot, afterwards Duke of Tyrconnel, and Sir John Resesby must also be ranked among this beauty's early admirers. Speaking of his visit to Paris

¹ "A French Ambassador at the Court of Charles II.," pp. 94, 95.

in 1659, and of his popularity at the Palais Royal, the latter says, "Several English and Irish families, either from choice or banishment, lived there at this time. Amongst others, the daughter of my Lady Hamilton, wife of Sir George Hamilton, and sister of the Duke of Ormonde, whom I liked so well that after she came with her mother to England, as she did soon after, I had probably married her, had not my friends strongly opposed it, she being a papist, and her fortune not being great at present. She married afterwards the Count de Gramont, brother to the Duke of that name in France."¹

Cominges speaks also of the attentions paid by her handsome cousin, the son of the Duke of Ormonde, meaning presumably Richard Butler, Earl of Arran, who was her senior only by two years, and quite a lady killer, according to Gramont's "Memoirs." He makes no allusion to the gentleman in regard to rivalry with himself. The French Ambassador, however, says that the Count would have made his trip to France sooner after his marriage—in May instead of late autumn—had it not been that under the pretext of relationship his visits had been very assiduous to the Countess before her marriage—"people—say that he has as much trouble to leave his wife as he had to marry her." And it would seem as if the Count did not win the prize so easily after all, for although the beauty's brothers appear to have been anxious to settle the

¹ Reresby's Memoirs, 1875 ed. p. 43.

match, other of her relatives were very averse to it, and indeed would have persuaded the King to interfere. But the easy-going Charles let matters take their course without interference.¹

So far nothing has been said of her parentage. She was the eldest daughter of the nine children of Sir George Hamilton and Mary Butler, the daughter of Viscount Thurles and sister of James, first Duke of Ormonde. Her grandfather was James, first Earl of Abercorn. She was born in Roscrea, co. Tipperary, in 1641. After Charles I.'s execution her parents, like many other royalist families in very reduced circumstances, migrated to France, and Lord Ormonde's residence near Caen provided them with a home. The fortunes of the Hamiltons revived with the Restoration and they became conspicuous figures at Court, as may be seen in the famous "Memoirs" dictated to the third son, Anthony, by his lively brother-in-law.

James, the eldest son, became groom of the bed-chamber to the King. It is he who figures somewhat ludicrously as the lover of the Countess of Chesterfield; and George, the second son, who was page to Charles in Holland, as "La Belle Stuart's" admirer, the beauty who eventually accepted the Duke that had offered Miss Hamilton his hand.²

¹ Letter from Cominges to Lionne, December, 1663, *vide* "French Ambassador at the Court of Charles II.," p. 95.

² The three brothers, according to Pepys, seem to have been on very intimate terms with Lady Castlemaine.

George married Frances Jennings, sister of the beautiful Duchess of Marlborough, a lady whom Gramont likened to the Goddess of Spring. But we speak of her elsewhere.¹

Three out of the six brothers died a soldier's death. James was killed in an engagement with the Dutch in 1673; George, at the Battle of Saverne in 1675; and John at the Battle of Aughrim. Richard and Anthony also fought gallantly for King James in 1689-90, the latter joining the exiled Court at Saint-Germain, where he died in 1720.

Gramont and his beautiful young wife were very popular with the Merry Monarch, as may be judged from his correspondence with his favourite sister. When the match was announced he expressed the wish that they would be as happy as possible. On January 18, 1664, he writes: "I have not had yett time to talke with the Comte de Gramont, he is so taken up with his wife as I have scarce seen him these two days that he has been heere, but that fury continues not long, and I beeleve he will be as reasonable in that point as most men are, and then I will give you a farther account of our conversation."²

In the September following the Countess became a mother, and her husband, says Cominges, looked much younger for the happy event, this and the prospect of returning to France having erased some of the wrinkles

¹ See pp. 239-251.

² "Madame," by Julia Cartwright, p. 153.



ELIZABETH HAMILTON, COMTESSE DE GRAMONT



about his eyes and forehead.¹ Some six weeks later² the happy pair started on their journey, bearing the following letter from Charles to his sister :—

“Whitehall, 23 Oct., 1664. I hope you will be well satisfied with the last letter I writt to you, for in it I sayd nothing but what came from my harte, and as I then tould you, I do now againe, that if I did not intend what I write, I would not adresse it to you. The Comte de Gramont will give you this, and he will tell you how kind I am to you. I pray be kinde to him, and to his wife, for my sake, and if at any time there be an occasion to send hether one of his talent, there is nobody will be more wellcome to me than him. I will say no more to you now because this letter will be long upon the way, only againe recommend them both to your protection, and desire you to beleeve that I am intirely yours.—C. R.”

The following day he again wrote :—

“I writt to you yesterday, by the Comte de Gramont, but I beleeve this letter will come sooner to your handes, for he goes by the way of Diepe with his wife and family, and now that I have named her, I cannot choose but againe desire you to be kinde to her, for besides the meritt her family has, on both sides, she is as good a creature as ever lived. I beleeve she will passe for a handsome woman in France, though

¹ “French Ambassador at the Court of Charles II.,” p. 95.

² October 24th–November 3rd.

she has not yett, since her lying in, recovered that good shape she had before, and I am affraide never will."¹

It may here be explained that Count de Gramont had been exiled from his country, having incurred Louis XIV.'s displeasure owing to the attentions he had been bold enough to pay to the handsome niece of the Marshal de la Mothe-Houdancourt. The King himself became infatuated with her great beauty. Lucy was one of the Queen's Maids of Honour, and the story is related that Louis, not being permitted to enter the apartments set aside for these damsels, had recourse to the stratagem of approaching this somewhat intriguing lady through the chimney. Upon one occasion, however, he discovered that an iron grating had been placed to impede his ingress by the mistress of the maids, the Duchess de Navailles, which led to that lady's dismissal. At the same time, however, the beautiful La Vallière was doing her best to encourage the King's romantic attachment to herself. So as his Majesty could not enter heart and soul into two *liaisons* at once, he gave the preference to her, and Lucy had to go to the wall.

The Duchess of Orleans, as her royal brother had desired, received the new Countess very graciously. But if we may go by what the Count himself relates (although he somewhat confuses matters by saying he returned to his country as a bachelor, and not a

¹ Dalrymple's *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 26. This letter was written in 1664; not, as often stated, in 1668 and 1669.

married man), the reception of Louis was not so cordial.¹

Speaking of the Countess de Gramont, Henrietta says in a letter to Charles II., "She is really one of the best women I ever knew in my life. As for the Comte de Gramont, he is the most English of men, and shows this every day in a thousand ways."² But many of the great French ladies were not of Madame's opinion respecting the Countess, who received the appointment of "Dame du Palais" and lady-in-waiting to the Queen. Dangeau says that Madame de Maintenon was jealous of her, and Madame de Caylus states that she was found to be more pleasing in appearance than amiable—that she was affected and haughty, in fact "Anglaise insupportable."

The Count de Gramont paid several visits to England, judging by the events recorded in his "Memoirs" in comparison with the dates of these occurrences in Pepys' Diary.³ He and his Countess were conspicuous figures in the train of the Duchess of Orleans when she made her important trip to Dover in 1670, and they were present at her interment so shortly afterwards at St. Denis.

Besides the son born in 1664, there were two daughters, Claude Charlotte and Mary Elizabeth,

¹ "Memoirs of Count de Gramont."

² "Madame," p. 218.

³ *Vide* the author's edition of the "Memoirs of Count de Gramont," Appendix I.

neither of whom inherited their mother's good looks, which Dangeau tells us did not prevent them from being great intriguers. The former, in particular, was gifted with her father's wit. She became the wife of Henry Howard, Viscount Stafford. The other daughter became Abbess of the Canonesses of Lorraine. Louis XIV. soon forgot all about his rivalry with the Count de Gramont, and admitted him into the closest intimacy ; he soon found him indispensable at Versailles. He gave him and his wife a mansion near Meudon, on the Seine, where they held a little court of their own ; but the name Le Moulineau is all that remains of this luxurious resort of wit and fashion.¹

Gramont died in 1707, aged eighty-six, and his wife aged sixty-seven in the following year. The Countess devoted the latter part of her life to the Church, and to the somewhat difficult task of converting her husband. Altogether her position must have been a difficult one to, as Dangeau says, make the duties of a wife compatible with the known follies and irregularities of her husband.²

Lely's fine painting at Hampton Court is certainly the most attractive of her portraits ; she is here represented as St. Catherine, holding a small palm branch in her hand. Her eyes are blue, her hair a

¹ See Vizetelly's edition of the "Memoirs of Count de Gramont," vol. i. p. xviii.

² Dangeau's Journal.

light chestnut colour, and her complexion brilliant. Indeed, with the exception of the painter's splendid portrait of Louise de Keroualle at Coombe Abbey, few of his works can come up to this in finish and rich colouring. Other fine portraits of her, also by Lely, are at Althorp and the National Portrait Gallery. The latter must have been painted after her return to France in 1664—a tendency towards "fat and forty" shows her here to less advantage, and one may readily recognise, with the advance of years, that trait in her character which the ladies of the French Court objected to.

NELL GWYN

THE popularity of pretty, witty Nell has resulted in giving us a very confused idea as to what she was like. Were one to visit consecutively the picture galleries in Great Britain, public and private, which contain a portrait of the famous actress, we should be as near the truth as ever. Blondes, brunettes; beauties tall, short, plump, lean; faces stamped with the brightest intelligence and those utterly expressionless and namby-pamby: variety in abundance to perplex the mind, but sufficiently accommodating to allow the contemplative the privilege of selection according to his own conception.

It is to the art dealer of ages past (we will not include the present time) we are indebted for this great variety, from the mere fact that a portrait of "Sweet Nell of Old Drury" has always commanded a higher price than other contemporary beauties, even be they Duchesses; so to-day Nell holds as much supremacy over her betters as she did in her lifetime in the galleries at Whitehall.



NELL GWYN



To quote a few examples, the actress who smiles from her canvas in the National Portrait Collection, with a combined expression of impudence and mischievousness, were it not that she is here shown to be rather dark than fair, appears to be the character to the life. There is vivacity and wit, as well as a proportion of vulgarity in the face, convincing enough if she was only a blonde. Far different is Lely's life-like painting at Althorp, which is unquestionably authentic. The face, surrounded by a profusion of fair curls, is expressive of her great characteristic, humanity. Here we have the Court favourite rather than the actress, and good nature, if somewhat insipid in expression, is predominant.

Of undoubted authenticity, also, is the well-known portrait of her with a lamb, and engraved in Mrs. Jameson's work, of which a replica, minus the lamb, was sold among the Peel heirlooms. In many respects this is like the Althorp picture. But compare with these the dark, dreamy-eyed beauty who recently appeared on Christie's walls among the Townshend heirlooms, or the rather long-faced brunette at Hampton Court misnamed Nell Gwyn, but undoubtedly the second wife of James II., Marie d'Este. Far different, again, from these is the plump and pretty but unvivacious face at Rushbrooke Hall, of which a replica at Syon House is named "the Countess of Northumberland," and at the National Portrait Gallery "Moll Davis."

To enlarge upon the subject would be tedious,¹ the above is merely given as an example of the various types of face this accomplished actress has assumed so as to mystify us as much as possible. Beyond telling us that she was a "mighty pretty creature" Pepys leaves us in the dark, and she was too distasteful by far to Evelyn for him to give us any description whatever. One cannot be far wrong in imagining the correct likeness to have been a slightly built, sprightly little creature more pretty than handsome, with rather sleepy, laughter-loving eyes, and mirth playing around the corners of the mouth: a small and somewhat receding chin, and fair ringlets. Nelly appeared far more attractive to a connoisseur like Pepys in her unprofessional surroundings than embellished with her war-paint. The two pictures that he gives of her, one in her home at Drury Lane, and the other behind the scenes, are very realistic:—

May 1, 1667. "To Westminster: on the way meeting many milk-maids with their garlands upon their pails, dancing with a fiddler before them; and saw pretty Nelly standing at her lodging's door in Drury Lane, in her smock sleeves and bodice, looking upon one: she seemed a mighty pretty creature."

Oct. 5, 1667. "To the King's House: and there going in met with Knepp² and she took

¹ *Vide* Introduction to the author's edition of "Count de Gramont," p. xxi.

² Mrs. Knipp or Knep, the actress friend of Pepys, was the wife of a Smithfield horse-dealer.

us up into the tireing-rooms: and to the women's shift where Nell was dressing herself, and was all unready, and is very pretty, prettier than I thought. And so walked all up and down the house above, and then below into the scene-room, and there sat down, and she gave us fruit; and here I read the questions to Knepp while she answered me through all her part of 'Flora's Figarys' which was acted to-day. But Lord! to see how they were both painted would make a man mad, and did make me loath them; and what base company of men comes among them, and how lewdly they talk! and how poor the men are in clothes, and yet what a show they make on the stage by candle-light, is very observable. But to see how Nell cursed, for having so few people in the pit, was pretty; the other house carrying away all the people at the new play, and is said, nowadays, to have generally most company, as being better players."

Nell's lodgings in Drury Lane, at the top of "Maypole Alley," one of the many old houses associated with her name, was pulled down in 1891. For many years it was a public-house and bore the sign of "The Cock and Pie." But the squalid surroundings were very different at the time when Pepys wrote, for in those days the town house of the Earl of Craven (the fine old Cavalier who is said to have been married to James I.'s daughter, the Queen of Bohemia) stood close by,¹ and the locality was

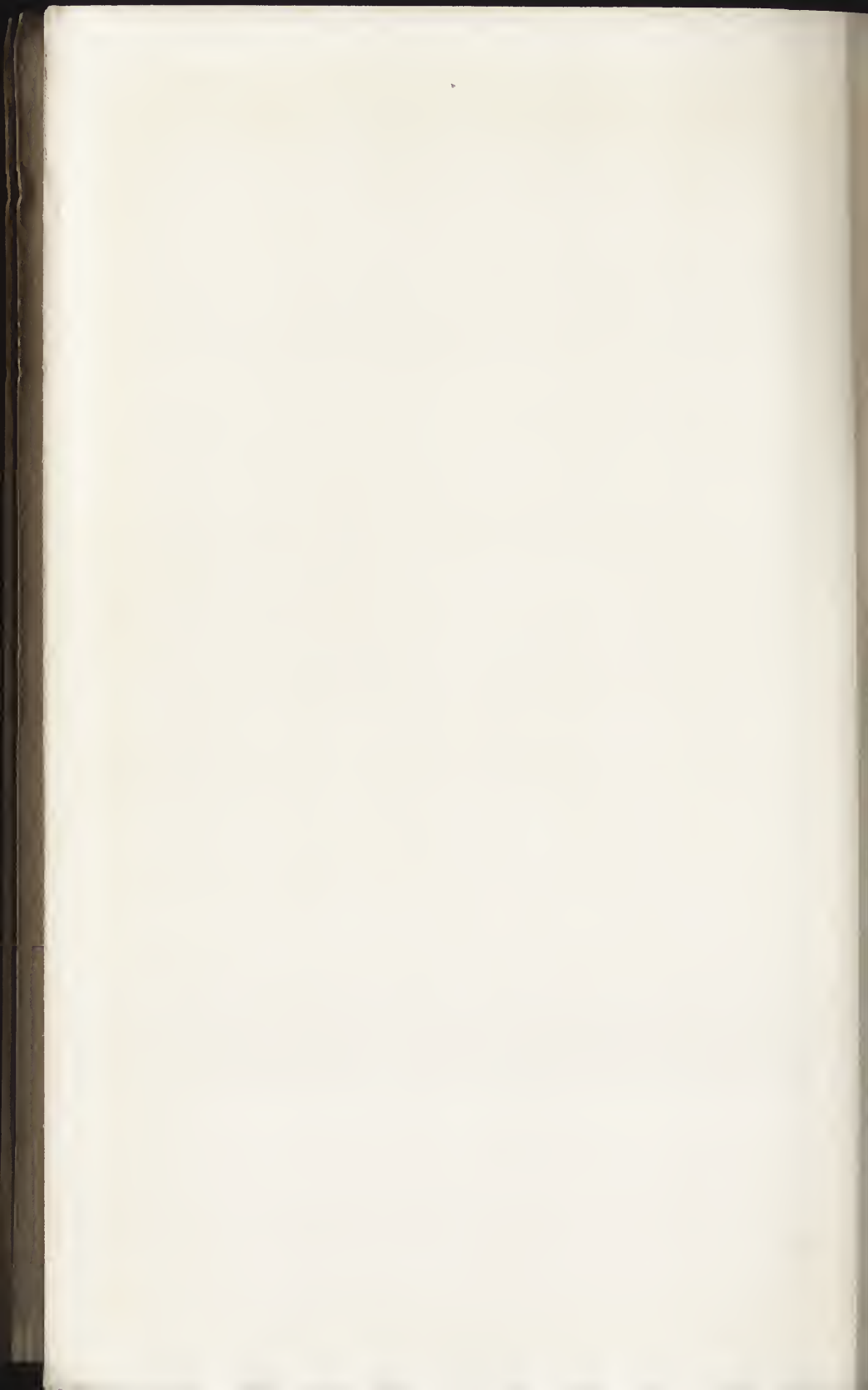
¹ The mansion was pulled down in 1809.

distinctly fashionable although it had its disreputable quarters.

The singing and dancing of little Moll Davis at the rival playhouse, "The Duke's," accounted for the bad attendance at the King's Theatre. Nell had created a sensation by her pertness and agility dressed in boy's clothes, but her rival went one better with the result that she danced herself into the King's favour first, and scarcely three months after Pepys heard Nell using forcible language owing to the poor house, Moll had installed herself in that corner of the heart of the susceptible monarch which the runaway Frances Stuart had left vacant. A sumptuous house was furnished for her in Suffolk Street, Haymarket, and she went about showing everybody a ring worth £700 which Charles had given her. Lady Castlemaine, who had been overjoyed at her rival's marriage with the Duke of Richmond and the disfavour into which she had fallen in consequence, deeply resented that a jig dancer on the stage should take her place. Pepys describes how one day at the play Moll was seated in a box immediately over the royal box in which her ladyship and the King were, and how when his Majesty appeared to be far more interested in what was going on above than on the stage, her ladyship looked up to see who it was, and turned crimson when she recognised the actress. Moll Davis had some good blood in her veins. Near her native village of Charlton, in Wiltshire, where she



NELL GWYN



was once a milkmaid, stands the fine old seat of the Howards, and Colonel Charles Howard, who afterwards became second Earl of Berkshire, is said to have been her father, although a blacksmith named Davis (who had descendants of the same name living in Charlton in the nineteenth century) also claimed that distinction.¹ The Colonel's brothers, Robert and Edward, both were interested in the stage, and the connection may have facilitated her advancement in the King's favour. One does not hear much of Moll Davis after the birth of her daughter in 1673. This girl, Mary Tudor, was acknowledged by the King. She married in 1687, Francis Radcliffe, second Earl of Derwentwater, whose son James, the third Earl, was beheaded on Tower Hill in 1716 for his allegiance to the Jacobite cause. His brother Charles shared the same fate in the insurrection of 1745.

The present Lord Petre is lineally descended from the handsome and immensely popular third Earl of Derwentwater, and at Thorndon Hall, near Brentwood, is preserved an old oak chest containing gruesome relics of the tragedy on Tower Hill, viz., the Jacobite Earl's clothes and his shirt cut away around the neck to facilitate the decapitation, and also the black serge covering of the block cleanly severed by the keen blade

¹ The story that Pepys heard that she was the daughter of the then Earl of Berkshire, viz. : Thomas Howard, first Earl, was incorrect. See Diary, January 14, 1667-68. *Vide* the author's edition of the "Memoirs of Count de Gramont," pp. 333-34.

of the axe. An old woman who resided, within living memory, in the Almshouses at Ingatestone, not many miles from Thorndon, used to be very proud of the fact that her mother had sewn on the head of Charles II.'s grandson. It is interesting to note that although an old tombstone, near that of the loyal Richard Penderel in the churchyard of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, bears an inscription and the arms of the Jacobite Earl, his body was afterwards removed to the family vault in the old chapel at Dilston Hall, near Hexham. When the tomb was opened in 1805, the handsome young face was in a perfect state of preservation, and could be easily recognised from his portrait.

To return to Moll's rival, as is well known, Nell's parentage was somewhat obscure. The story that she was the daughter of a fruiterer in Covent Garden, and was born in the Coal Yard in Drury Lane (re-christened Goldsmith Street),¹ sounds more probable than that she was born in Pipe Well Lane (re-christened Gwyn Street), Hereford, and was the daughter of Captain Thomas Gwyn : indeed, as Mr. Wheatley has pointed out, there is a question as to whether the actress's correct name was Gwyn at all, there being a tradition that it was Margaret Symcott. The Christian name of the actress's mother, however, is known to have been Ellen. This lady, in the year 1679 when she was corpulent and somewhat addicted to the bottle, had the misfortune to fall in the river (her house being

¹ Wheatley's edition of Cunningham's "Nell Gwyn," p. 2.

situated on the banks of the Thames, by the "Neat Houses," Chelsea, a place resorted to by Pepys for little picnic outings¹), and was drowned. Some fourteen years before this Nell made her first appearance on the stage, being at the time not yet fifteen. The play was Dryden's "Indian Emperor," and her part "Cydaria," a serious character unsuited to her.²

At this early age she appears to have had an admirer in Robert Dongan, a lieutenant in the Duke of York's Life Guards, a fickle gentleman who, according to de Gramont's "Memoirs," was the cause of a falling out of the two Maids of Honour, Miss Blague and Miss Price, and whose death (about 1669) drove the latter almost to despair. Prior to this Nell's vocation had been selling oranges at sixpence apiece in the pit of the theatre, where her pretty, vivacious face made her very popular. Before then she is said to have been dragged from deeper obscurity by Madame Ross, a notorious woman of the times.

When Nell's fortunes were on the upward scale and she had passed from Dongan into the possession of the actors John Lacy and Charles Hart, and eventually of Lord Buckhurst, a rival actress, Rebecca Marshall, who herself was no better than she ought to have been,³

¹ Pepys' Diary, August 1, 1667 ; May 28, 1668.

² She played this again in 1667, and Pepys, who saw it then, expressed the same disapproval.

³ When Lady Castlemaine was infatuated with Charles Hart it was "Beck" Marshall who made the assignations. (Pepys' Diary, April 7, 1668.)

made a cutting remark about her mode of life, Nell justified her lack of morals by candidly admitting she had served her apprenticeship in a house of ill-fame where her duty was "to fill strong waters to the guests."¹

It was in July, 1667, that witty but profligate Buckhurst became the privileged party. Pepys was much perturbed when he heard that this notorious rake had persuaded her to quit the stage for an annuity of £100 a year. "To the King's Head" [Epsom], says this inimitable patron of the stage on Sunday, July 14, "where our coachman carried us, and there had an ill room for us to go into, but the best in the house that was not taken up. Here we called for drink and bespoke dinner, and hear that my Lord Buckhurst and Nelly are lodged at the next house and Sir Charles Sidly [Sedley] with them, and keep a merry house. Poor girl! I pity her, but more the loss of her at the King's House."

Much altered and modernised, the old building where these three lively sparks kept merry house is still standing. It is now a grocer's shop. Tradition points to two bay-windowed rooms as those occupied by the famous actress. A hiding place is said to have been discovered in one of these rooms some years ago. But though Nell was not one to blush for her sins, why should she not have had such an accommodation? Such places have been associated with other historic per-

¹ Pepys' Diary, October 26, 1667.



NELL GWYN



sonages : Cromwell, for instance, and Charles James Fox, and even Henry VIII. !

On the outskirts of the town, in the direction of the Durdans, is another old building associated with Nelly in her still more flourishing days. It is known as Nell Gwyn's stables, and is said to have been built for her by Charles II., or, as she called the Merry Monarch, her Charles III., for two Charles's had reigned before him as far as her favours were concerned. In after years, when the actress used to visit Epsom in all her state, those two little bay windows must have brought back memories of the July "jaunt," for by August his versatile lordship had already had enough of her,¹ and was willing to hand her over to the next aspirant.

In the early part of the ensuing year the news was afloat that Nell had caught the King's fancy. She had returned to the stage and had played up to the easy-going monarch as Moll Davis had done, and with equal success. Whether or not it was she or the other Mrs. Quin or Gwyn (who frequently is confused with Nell), who in the part of Edward III.'s mistress had opportunities of making sly overtures to the royal box, it is doubtful to say, in any case, shortly afterwards, her not too delicate witticisms were to be heard at Whitehall, scandalising but amusing everybody, except perhaps the Queen and Lady Castlemaine. Ere long it was an open secret that she was the King's mistress, although she never occupied apartments in the Palace. Upon coming

¹ Pepys' Diary, August 26, 1667.

into Court favour she removed from Lincoln's Inn Fields to a house on the north side of Pall Mall, where her next-door neighbour was Lady Mary Howard, but this she vacated in 1671 for one on the opposite side which the King gave her, whose site is now occupied by the Eagle Insurance Company. A few doors off lived Moll Knight the singer, another mistress of Charles, who is said first to have introduced Nell to him, a lady whose propensity for swearing was scarcely less than that of her lively neighbour.

The houses on this side of Pall Mall had gardens with raised ground or mounts at the end overlooking the gardens of St. James's Palace. Evelyn's allusion to the conversation he overheard between the King and the new tenant is well known, but worth repetition. In the morning the connoisseur had introduced an example of Gibbons' wonderful carving to Charles' notice. Afterwards he "walked with him through St. James's Park to gardens, where I both saw and heard a very familiar discourse between . . . [him] and Mrs. Nellie, as they called an impudent comedian, she looking out of her garden on a terrace at the top of the wall, and . . . [the King] standing on the green walk under it. I was heartily sorry at this scene."¹ Cunningham, in his "Story of Nell Gwyn," says that a portion of the mount or raised terrace could still be seen in 1851² under the park wall of Marlborough House. Among

¹ Evelyn's Diary, March 1st, 1671.

² Cunningham's work first appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.



DIANA DE VERE,
DUCHESS OF ST. ALBANS



DIANA KIRKE, COUNTESS OF OXFORD



many old houses in the suburbs associated in some way or another, rightly or wrongly, with "Witty Nell," the tradition still lingers at Lauderdale House, Highgate, that her first child, Charles Beauclerc, who was born in May, 1670, obtained his earldom through his mother's expedient of holding the infant arm's length out of the window over the porch and saying she would drop the little bastard if his royal father did not there and then confer a suitable title upon him, whereat the King is said to have shouted out, "Save the Earl of Burford!" The creation dates from 1676, and that of the Dukedom of St. Albans from 1684. The former name still lingers at Windsor, where Burford House was built for the actress and for the Earl and his heirs after her death. Judging from Kip's engraving of it, it must have been a palatial mansion.

Nell's second son, Lord James Beauclerc, born in December, 1671, died when he was scarcely nine, but the elder boy, the Duke, lived to fifty-six. As was the case with his half-brother, the Duke of Northumberland, he grew up to be very like his father, having the same marked features and swarthy complexion, as well as his easy-going nature and love of pleasure. In 1694 he married the last survivor of the De Veres, Earls of Oxford. Charles, with an eye upon her wealth, had betrothed Lady "Di," the daughter of Aubrey de Vere, the twentieth Earl, to his natural son, when she was quite a child. Judging from her full-length portrait by Kneller at Hampton Court, which was painted before

her marriage, she has a particularly pleasing expression. Her lovely eyes made her a favourite toast of the Kit-Kat Club. Her mother, Diana Kirke, was a great beauty. Her portrait by Lely was lent some years ago to the "Fair Women" Exhibition by Mr. Drummond, of Peshurst, one of a large collection of Lely's left by one of the Dukes of St. Albans to his grandfather. Di's aunt, Mary Kirke, was equally favoured with good looks, at least the Comte de Gramont said so, and he was a judge.¹

One of Nelly's many reputed residences, Sandford Manor House, Chelsea, is in an excellent state of preservation, although its present gas-work surroundings are sadly out of harmony with its old-world appearance. The King's Road, so says the tradition, derived its name from the frequent visits of the Merry Monarch. Brentford also has the honour of possessing one of the actress's abodes, and Leyton not long since claimed a like distinction, nor must a quaint old building cased in ornamental plaster work at Newport on the Newmarket road be forgotten. Surely tablets should be placed upon them to her memory, as one of the most popular characters of English history, for had not "the indiscreetest and wildest creature that ever was in a Court"² a generous nature and a kind and sympathetic heart which won her universal

¹ *Vide* the author's edition of the "Memoirs of Count de Gramont," footnote p. 118.

² Bishop Burnet's "Own Time."



AUBREY DE VERE, EARL OF OXFORD

Full-length.

By Maria Verelst ? after ?



popularity? There are stories innumerable of her kind and charitable actions: of her helping hand to genius in distress. The poorest in the land and the highest fallen in disgrace would come to Nell for help. We find her interceding for Monmouth when he was in disfavour,¹ and paying the debts of the impecunious to keep them out of prison. Jesse quotes an anecdote of her popularity handed down to the eighteenth century by an eye-witness. The King's silversmith had on exhibition a costly service which he had made for the Duchess of Portsmouth, and the crowds who came to see it were unanimous in the opinion that "Madame Ellen" should have had it, but as the French mistress was to be the recipient it was the universal wish that the metal should be melted and poured down the lady's throat.²

Though no contemporary documents exist which can confirm that the original idea of the Chelsea pensioners was Nell's, the popular tradition is probably correct. Evelyn says the suggestion came from Sir Stephen Fox, but for all that the idea probably was hers, or her influence originally brought it about. Evelyn was not one to look for any good in her, nor would he record a popular belief in her favour. In his eyes no good was possible in a woman of her calling.

Of Nell's acting we have said little. Let an eye-

¹ "King Monmouth," p. 82.

² *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1752: Jesse's "Memoirs of the Stuarts."

witness speak for himself. "To the King's playhouse," says Pepys, Dec. 8, 1666, "and there did see a good part of 'The English Monsieur,' which is a mighty pretty play, very witty and pleasant. And the women do very well, but above all little Nelly." The part of "Lady Wealthy" in Howard's comedy was well suited to the actress, but not such a success as Florimel in Dryden's "Maiden Queen." Pepys saw this tragi-comedy at the King's House on March 2, 1666-67. "There is a comical part done by Nell, which is Florimell, that I never can hope ever to see the like done again by man or woman—so great performance of a comical part was never, I believe, in the world before as Nell do this both as a mad girle, then most and best of all when she comes in like a young gallant; and hath the motions and carriage of a spark the most that ever I saw any man have. It makes me, I confess, admire her." He speaks of the play again on March 25, 1667. "Saw 'The Mayden Queen' again, which indeed the more I see the more I like, and is an excellent play and so done by Nell, her merry part, as cannot be better done in nature I think." The character of Mirida, a madcap girl in "The Mad Couple," also suited her to perfection. It "is but an ordinary play," says Pepys, on Dec. 28, 1667, "but only Nell's and Hart's mad parts are most excellently done, but especially her's: which makes it a miracle to me to think how ill she do any serious part, as the other day, just like a fool or changeling; and in a mad part, do beyond all imita-

tion almost." The famous journal had come to an end before she appeared in the part of "Almahide" in Dryden's "Conquest of Granada," which was played in 1670. Nelly "in a broad brimmed hat and waistbelt," speaking the prologue, surely would have pleased the playgoing clerk of the Admiralty as much as it did her royal lover. This was her last appearance on the stage.

Although the extravagance in the actress mistress's expenditure in no way approached that of her rival, the Duchess of Portsmouth, we may gather from the disbursements of the Privy Purse and from Nell's household bills that she was surrounded by luxury; some items in the latter also give a curious insight into the showiness of her naturally somewhat theatrical surroundings. Some years ago we had the opportunity of examining a collection of these, and have always regretted that no notes were taken at the time, as access cannot now be had to the papers. Cunningham, however, speaks of other bills of a similar nature, the most remarkable of which is a silversmith's account, dated 1674, of over eleven hundred pounds for a bedstead of the precious metal, ornamented with a strange medley of eagles, cupids, crowns, &c., and made quite up to date with the figure of the agile rope dancer, Jacob Hall, her rival Cleveland's latest lover, going through his performance.¹ Doubtless this remarkable piece of furniture long since has been

¹ "Story of Nell Gwyn," 1892 ed. pp. 166, 167.

melted down, perhaps in the latter part of her life when her creditors became clamorous for long-delayed payments. The rest of this sleeping apartment presumably was in keeping for "greate siluer andyrans" figure in the list. A pair of satin shoes laced over with gold for "Master Charles" were of course those of the Duke of St. Albans, the King's son, who after his father's death obtained from his uncle Janes the Nottinghamshire estate of Bestwood, which still appertains to the ducal house.

It would be interesting to know if the portrait of Nelly's sister, which hung on the walls of her house in Pall Mall, is still in existence. When Rose Cassells, *née* Gwyn, became a widow in 1675, her sister obtained a pension for her. She afterwards married a Mr. Forster.¹

Nell outlived her Royal protector a little over two years and a half, dying of apoplexy in November, 1687. At her express wish she was interred in the Church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields (pulled down in 1721), where "old Mrs. Gwyn," her mother, had been buried eight years before.

In Lely's two portraits at Althorp, and in that by Varelst at Littlecotes, she is represented wearing the pearl necklace which she purchased from Prince Rupert's mistress, the actress Peg Hughes, for over four thousand guineas.

¹ Query was he related to the Jacobite who fought for the Chevalier in 1715?



NELL GWYN



At "Philberts," backstair Chiffinch's house near Bray, an old gabled, half-timbered building, with spacious bay-windows and twisted chimneys, whither Charles was wont to seek relaxation from his kingly state at Windsor, there used to be a bust of Nell in white marble. This we believe is now at Bramshill, the old seat of the Copes.¹

At the "Fair Women's" Exhibition held in London a few years ago, we remember seeing her quaint old dressing-case and implements which was said to have come to the possessor, Mr. Crisp, direct from some of her descendants. Of equal interest also is her virginal made by Adam Liversedge in 1666, with a quaint painting of the Mall inside the lid. It was exhibited among the loan collection of musical instruments at Fishmongers' Hall in 1904, by Mr. Arthur Hill. And a third relic must not be forgotten: the looking-glass with elaborate carved frame which came from her first house in Pall Mall. It may still be seen in the Army and Navy Club, which was erected near its site.

¹ Upon these expeditions the King was usually accompanied by Buckingham, whom he generally met by appointment at "The Duke's Head" in Peascod Street, Windsor. "Philberts" was rebuilt over a century ago. Some of the portraits that adorned the walls are now at Goodwood and Tetworth.

THE COUNTESS OF SHREWSBURY

ANNA MARIA, the eldest daughter of the Royalist Robert Brudenel, Earl of Cardigan, might well be represented in one of her early portraits as *Minerva* equipped for war; but wisdom in no way appears to have been bestowed upon her, if we may judge from the troubles that she brought about. She prided herself not so much in her conquests, as the fact that those she favoured risked their lives to obtain their reward. "I would take a wager," says a contemporary writer, "that if she had a man killed for her every day, she would only hold her head the higher for it."

In January, 1658-59, this beauty became the second wife of Francis Talbot, eleventh Earl of Shrewsbury,¹ and when the Restoration brought the young Countess to Court, her animation, good looks, and love of admiration soon made her a conspicuous figure where gallantry was the order of the day. Her husband had cause enough for jealousy, but does not appear to have had any serious resentment against his lady's behaviour

¹ His first wife was Anne, daughter of Sir John Conyers.



ANNA MARIA BRUDENEL, COUNTESS OF SHREWSBURY



until some years had passed and she had become entirely callous.

In Mary Beale's portrait of her at Althorp, and in Lely's in the National Collection, and at Knole, one can trace both brazenness and cruelty. There is something tiger-like in the voluptuousness of the notorious Countess which differs in a marked degree from the inanimate expression in some of the ladies of this period, nevertheless the face is by no means unattractive. Her luxurious light-brown tresses were unrivalled, and she gave samples in a most barefaced way to those of her favoured admirers. It may have been a compliment, but one wonders at the complaisance of the husband who would allow the gay sparks of the Court to wear bracelets of his wife's hair!

As may be expected, the name of one closely linked with that of Buckingham—George Villiers, the second Duke—must necessarily be tarnished.

Look at his portrait (which originally came from Donington Hall, in Leicestershire) in the National Collection. His character is clearly written in his face. Then compare with it Butler's description of him, and you have the man to the life as if you saw him before you, stepped straight out of Scott's "Peveril of the Peak."

"The Duke of Bucks is one," says the inimitable wit, "that has studied the whole body of vice. His parts are disproportionate to the whole, and like a master, he has more of some and less of others that he

should have. He has pulled down all that nature raised in him and built himself up again after a model of his own. He has dammed up all those lights that nature made into the noblest prospects of the world, and opened other little blind loopholes backward by turning day into night and night into day. His appetite to his pleasures is diseased and crazy, like the pica in a woman, that longs to eat that which was never made for food, or a girl in the green sickness, that eats chalk and mortar. Perpetual surfeits of pleasure have filled his mind with bad and vicious humours (as well as his body with a nursery of diseases) which makes him affect new and extravagant ways as being sick and tired with the old. Continual wine, women, and music, put false values upon things, which by custom become habitual, and debauch his understanding so that he retains no right notion, nor sense of things. And as the same dose of the same physic has no operation on those that are much used to it, so his pleasures require a larger proportion of excess and variety to render him sensible of them. He rises, eats, and goes to bed by the Julian account, long after all others that go by the new style: and keeps the same hours with ants and the antipodes. He is a great observer of the Tartar customs and never eats till the great Cham, having dined, makes proclamation that all the world may go to dinner. He does not dwell in his house, but haunts it like an evil spirit, that walks all night to disturb the family, and never appears

by day. He lives perpetually benighted, runs out of his life, and loses his time as men do their ways in the dark, and as blind men are led by their dogs, so is he governed by some mean servant or other, that relates to his pleasures. He is as inconstant as the moon which he lives under ; and although he does nothing but advise with his pillow all day, he is as great a stranger to himself as he is to the rest of the world. His mind entertains all things very freely that come and go ; but like guests and strangers, they are not welcome if they stay long. This lays him open to all cheats, quacks, and impostors, who apply to every particular humour while it lasts, and afterwards vanish. Thus with St. Paul, though in a different sense, he dies daily, and only lives in the night. He deforms nature while he intends to adorn her, like Indians that hang jewels in their lips and noses. His ears are perpetually drilled with a fiddlestick. He endures pleasures with less patience than other men do their pains."

But although her scandalous way of living with Buckingham, after her husband had been run through by the Duke's sword, revealed her character in its worst light, with all his faults he was not responsible for her lax morality. His brother-in-law, Colonel Thomas Howard, and his niece's husband, the Earl of Arran, not to mention Jermyn and Killigrew, had previously appeared upon the lady's programme. Howard,¹ the

¹ The fourth son of Sir William Howard, and brother of Charles, first Earl of Carlisle. He must not be confused with another

third husband of the Duke's sister, Mary Villiers, Duchess of Richmond, in many respects was like his brother-in-law, especially regarding his fiery temper.

There are several contemporary accounts of a desperate encounter which took place in Pall Mall in August, 1662, between him and Henry Jermyn,¹ owing to their rivalry about the Countess of Shrewsbury. The husband perhaps considered himself already injured enough to figure in the combat, anyhow he did not appear in it, Howard taking Jermyn's attentions to the lady as an affront to himself. Pepys, speaking of the *affaire d'honneur* (?), says that Jermyn and everybody else was kept in ignorance as to the cause of the quarrel, but Count Gramont informs us that presumably for the sheer love of mischief, the Countess let Jermyn know of an entertainment which Howard had arranged at the famous Spring Garden.² The uninvited guest put in an appearance, and showed his bad taste by running down the repast and music, as well as paying open court to the lady. With great difficulty Howard mastered his temper, but a day or so afterwards he called him to account. "On Monday," runs a letter in the Verney Papers, "Tom Howard, brother to the Earl of Carlisle and Mr. Dillon, brother to Lord

Colonel Thomas Howard, a brother of James, third Earl of Suffolk. See *ante*, p. 135.

¹ Created Baron Dover in 1685.

² See the author's edition of the "*Memoirs of Count de Gramont.*"

Dillon,¹ accosted H. Germaine [Jermyn] and Giles Rawlins,² drew upon them before ——— door, coming from the Tennis Court, and Tom slew Giles dead in the place, and after that fell on Harry, and wounded him in three or four places, which prove but slight hurts, which done, Tom said, 'Now we have done justice, let's be gone,' and having their horses hard by, with pistols at the saddle bow, they presently fled, and 'tis thought that Howard had some hurt, for he was seen to bear himself up on his pummell. The quarrel it's said was between Howard and German about Lady Shrewsbury. It is also said that Howard was in buff, and that he cut off the heels of his boots, and so came fully prepared and took the other unawares, who because they had only the usual bodkins, desired their footmen's swords, but had them not; and yet Rawlins thrust so home that he bent his sword at the hilt, but buff or other armour would not suffer entrance. Dillon fought carelessly, as if willing neither to hurt nor be hurt, it being none of his quarrel."³ Pepys, who heard the news from Mr. Coventry, said it was Dillon who wore armour,⁴ while Rugge, in his *Diurnal*, says it was Dillon who killed Rawlins. Anyhow, the victors had to quit the country for a time, while

¹ Colonel Cary Dillon, afterwards fifth Earl of Roscommon.

² Colonel Giles Rawlins, Gentleman of the Privy Purse to James Duke of York.

³ Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 7, App. p. 484.

⁴ Pepys' Diary, August 19, 1662.

Jermyn recovered not, as would be thought, to renew his addresses in his rival's absence, but to pay them in another quarter.

Sir John Reresby says that Buckingham's infatuation for the Countess began at the time the King had given him a commission to raise a troop of horse in the north. The Duke, who was living in great state in Lord Irwin's house at York in the summer of 1666, invited the Earl of Shrewsbury and his wife and her parents with a large retinue, and a month was spent there in a continual round of gaieties. As the dancing, which usually continued until daybreak, was not a favourite pastime either with Lord Cardigan or Lord Shrewsbury, they usually retired somewhat earlier than the rest, little thinking that their noble host, for his own evil ends, was glad enough to get rid of them. Indeed one marvels at their child-like confidence in so notorious a rake. Still they remained in ignorance of the liaison that this certainly well-suited couple were carrying on, as did also the poor wronged Duchess, the daughter and heiress of Lord Fairfax.

Lord Brudenel, the Countess's brother, was one of the first who became suspicious. He "told me one day over a bottle of wine," says Reresby, "that coming hastily through the dining-room the evening before he saw two tall persons together, and he thought they looked like the Duke and his sister, but he would not be too inquisitive for fear it should prove so." But presently the eyes of other relatives and friends were

opened. Still the Countess was clever enough to avoid an open scandal, and the visit to York terminated harmoniously and peacefully. One can feel but little sympathy with Shrewsbury, and his ultimate fate perhaps was the best thing that could have happened to him, blessed as he was with such a spouse. One wonders if after all he would have called Buckingham to account had not it more or less been forced upon him by some unpleasant revelations which were made public property in July of the following year. It appears that prior to accepting the Duke as her lover, the lively lady had given encouragement to, if anything, a more unscrupulous and certainly a more despicable character : the rake Henry Killigrew, who was for ever mixed up in something discreditable, and usually more or less in disgrace. Gramont says that Killigrew became enslaved a few months after Monmouth's marriage, by which it may be inferred that three years had passed since then and the visit to York just mentioned. Upon occasions, especially when the bottle had passed round freely, Killigrew had not been too particular in the way in which he compromised the Countess's name, but such freedom of speech could not be winked at now. Killigrew, however, had far too much impudence to remain quiet, or bear passively the indignity of being put aside. We refer once more to the Verney Papers for the most graphic account of the somewhat undignified proceedings in the Duke's Theatre.

“H. Killigrew being in the next box to the Duke of

Buckingham at a play, drolled with him and made fun of him, and spake scurvy language at him, insomuch that the Duke told him he might govern his tongue and his face better. Killigrew went out of the box and would have had one Vaughan to have carried him a challenge ; but he refusing to do it in that place, he returned and stroke the Duke twice on the head with his sword in the scabbard, and then ran away most nobly over the boxes and forms, and the Duke after him, and cut him well favouredly, he crying, 'Good your Grace, spare my life,' and fell down, some say to beg for his life, but certainly the Duke kicked him. The Duke lost his wig in the pursuit for a while."¹

Buckingham's intrigue with the Countess of Shrewsbury having been thus noised abroad, a challenge at length arrived from the Earl, who even then was in no hurry, for nearly six months had elapsed since the brawl just described. The news reached the King's ears, who gave directions that the Duke should be prevented from meeting his adversary. The duel, however, arranged on a very extensive scale, took place without interruption in a wood near Barn Elms, which sequestered spot at this time was occasionally the resort of pic-nic parties.²

The Duke's seconds were Sir Robert Holmes and Captain William Jenkins, and those of the Earl, Sir

¹ Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 7, App. p. 486. See also Pepys' Diary, July 22, 1667.

² Pepys, May 26, 1667 ; August 21, 1668, &c.



ANNA MARIA BRUDENEL, COUNTESS OF SHREWSBURY



John Talbot and Mr. Bernard Howard, son or the Earl of Arundel. Shrewsbury was mortally wounded, Buckingham's sword having run through his right breast to his shoulder, Jenkins killed on the spot,¹ and Talbot severely wounded in one of his arms, while the remaining three did not come out of the *mêlée* unscathed. Walpole recounts the story originally related by Lord Peterborough, that the abandoned Countess held her paramour's horse, disguised as his page, during the encounter ;² while another account says she carried a loaded pistol concealed about her with which to put an end to her own and her husband's existence should he have proved the victor.³ The Duke, however, declared before the House of Lords in 1674 that at the time she was in a French convent, which seems to be even more doubtful, as after her husband's death from his wounds⁴ she went openly to live with him. For a week or so the Duke retired into private life, but by that time a royal pardon had been granted, and on February 6th his Grace was seen in the pit of the Duke's Theatre enjoying a new play by Etherege, who bore him company with his other boon companions, Buckhurst and Sedley. Pepys, who saw the Duke at

¹ Howard was Jenkins' opponent, *vide* Lady Burghclere's "George Villiers," p. 194

² Walpole's "Royal and Noble Authors."

³ Letter from Saint-Evremond to Waller, "George Villiers," p. 195.

⁴ He died at Arundel House nearly two months after the encounter.

the play, says, some three months later, "I am told that the Countess of Shrewsbury is brought home by the Duke of Buckingham to his house, where his Duchess saying that it was not for her and the other to live together in a house, he answered, 'Why, Madam, I did think so, and therefore have ordered your coach to be ready to carry you to your father's,' which was a devilish speech, but, they say, true, and my Lady Shrewsbury is there it seems."¹ There is a tradition at the beautiful riverside seat of Cliveden in Buckinghamshire, that after the duel the guilty pair retired there, in Pope's words :—

"Gallant and gay, in Cliveden's proud alcove,
The bower of wanton Shrewsbury and love,"

but as Mr. Steinman points out, twelve years later the house was in course of erection, at which time (1680) the Countess had married again, and was leading, better late than never, a respectable life. This of course was the first house of Cliveden, since rebuilt two or three times. Still there is nothing to prove that there was not a smaller residence here before the Duke built the more important mansion. Evelyn visited the spot in 1679, and speaks of the buildings of extraordinary expense, the cloisters, descents, gardens, the stately avenue, the romantic grottos, &c. Lord Ronald Gower, in a most graphic and picturesque description of Cliveden of to-

¹ May 15, 1668

day,¹ speaks of Buckingham's grand old terrace and its unrivalled view, and of the magnificent ancient yew-trees with weird and gnarled roots twisting out of the grey cliff, which must have been old trees in the days of Charles II.

The Countess of Shrewsbury does not appear to have had an opportunity of settling accounts with her old lover Killigrew before May, 1669, for it was certainly owing to him that her misdeeds were brought to light, indeed for once she seems to have felt ashamed of herself, but it may have been the hopes of vengeance that prompted her ladyship to run away, for she did absent herself for a time. "My Lady Shrewsbury," says Henry Savile, writing to his brother, "with only one chambermaid took to her heels, and they say is gone either into a monastery or to kill Harry Killigrew herself, since none of her relatives will undertake it, but her lord has sent to Dover and Rye to stop her if possible."² Presumably she did not succeed in overtaking the gentleman, who had adopted the precaution to use his heels also.

The attack on Killigrew in May, 1669, is recorded both by Pepys and by the French Ambassador, Colbert de Croissy. By the former account, as he was driving in a Hackney coach from the park to his house in Turnham Green, he was suddenly attacked and wounded in nine places by men hired by the Countess,

¹ *Vide* "My Reminiscences," by Lord Ronald Gower.

² Letters of Henry Savile to Sir George Savile.

who watched the assault from her coach. Colbert's version is as follows: "Infuriated against Killigrew because he boasted she had denied him no favour, the Countess nursed her anger against him until she could wreak vengeance. She was able to do this yesterday. Killigrew had arranged to visit her at her house, which is six miles from London. He went alone in a coach, and on the way fell asleep. He was awoke by the thrust of a sword, which pierced his neck and came out at the shoulder. Before he could cry out he was flung from the vehicle and stabbed in three other places by the varlets of the Countess. The lady herself looked on from her own coach and six, in which she was with her three daughters, and cried out to the assassins, 'Kill the villain!' Nor did she drive off until he was thought dead. He was but badly wounded, and has sworn informations."¹ These informations, however, led to little, for the all-powerful Duke was on the spot to protect his mistress, while the King's opinion of Killigrew's previous behaviour to the Countess was far from being in his favour.²

Upon his way back to London from Lord Arlington's seat, Euston, Evelyn lodged the night at Newmarket, where the Court was assembled for the races, but here he was quite out of his element and was much

¹ Colbert to Lionne, May 20, 1669. See "Louise de Keroualle," by H. Forneron, p. 50.

² *Vide* letter from Charles to the Duchess of Orleans, "Madame," by Julia Cartwright, p. 260.

shocked at the scenes of debauchery on all sides. "The Duke of Buckingham," he says, "was now in mighty favour, and had with him that impudent woman, the Countess of Shrewsbury, with his band of fiddlers, &c."¹

According to James II., the Duke actually had the effrontery to induce Dr. Sprat (the Duke of York's chaplain) to try and mend matters by performing the marriage ceremony, after which James says, "The true Duchess was called in raillery the Dowager Duchess."² Nor is the fact less astounding that a boy to whom the Countess gave birth towards the latter part of the year 1670 should have taken the Duke's second title of Earl of Coventry, and, to make matters worse, the King acted as godfather.³ The child, however, only lived a few months. In the burial register at Westminster Abbey is the following entry: "A young male child was layd in the Duke of Buckingham's vault, being related to that family, March 12, 1670-71." This was the illegitimate Earl of Coventry.

At the time that Louis XIV. was negotiating his second secret treaty with the English King, which was signed on February 2, 1670-71, "in order to fix Buckingham the better," the Countess of Shrewsbury received a pension of ten thousand livres. The bribe had due effect. The Marquis de Croissy, writing to

¹ See *ante*, p. 74.

² Macpherson's "Original Papers," 1776, p. 58.

³ Letter from Mr. Henshaw to Sir Robert Paston, Jesse's "Memoirs of the Stuarts."

Lionne, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at Paris, informed him that when the money was duly paid she said "she would make Buckingham comply with King Charles in all things."¹

So far the adulterous pair seem to have had it all their own way, but when Buckingham fell into disfavour with King and Parliament the day had arrived for an end to be put to this entire disregard of propriety. Upon the application of Francis, Lord Brudenell (the Countess's brother, who had detected the commencement of the scandalous amour at York), and some others, the Duke was commanded by the House of Lords to put an end to the alliance, both he and the Countess to enter into security to the King in the sum of ten thousand pounds apiece. For a proud and powerful peer like Buckingham to humble himself, and admit his sins and follies, must have been a great ordeal, but abject submission was the only means by which he could obtain absolution. By the beginning of 1674 the cause of all the trouble had retired to a convent at Dunkirk,² to do penance before reappearing as a respectable member of society, while the Duke was to be seen once more in public with his "Duchess Dowager," moreover at divine service.³

In 1676 the Countess bestowed her hand and heart

¹ Dalrymple's "Memoirs," 1773, Appendix, pp. 81, 82.

² Letter from Ruvigny to Pomponne, January 29, 1673-74. "Louise de Keroualle," p. 105.

³ *Ibid.*, February 16, 1673-74, p. 106. See also Lady Burghclere's "George Villiers," p. 296.

(if she had one) on the son of a Somersetshire knight, George Rodney Bridges, the second son of Sir Thomas Bridges, of Keynsham. On December 19th of this year Lord Roos received a letter from his sister stating that "Lady Shrewsbury, by the King's comand, was received at the Queen's Court the other day, and all the Dutchesse's yesterday," and on Christmas Day "Lady Shrewsbury hath bin by the King's absolute comand received by the Queene, who did beg itt of her to gratifie as he said the long reitterated request of her son and father. The Dutchesse afterwards received her and with much more kindnesse."¹ In July, 1678, we hear from the same source that her ladyship had purchased Mr. Godolphin's place of the bedchamber at £4,500 for her husband.²

At her seat at Avington, near Alresford, Hampshire, which came to her by her second husband, Charles II. is said to have been a frequent visitor when the Court was at Winchester, and the room that Nell Gwyn occupied is still pointed out. Lely's picture of the Countess as Minerva, mentioned in the beginning of this article, came originally from here. It was removed from thence to Stowe, and at that famous sale joined the Peel heirlooms, and when they were recently dispersed the picture came into Mr. Colnaghi's possession.³

¹ Belvoir Papers, Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 12, App. pt. ii. pp. 33, 34.

² *Ibid.*, p. 52.

³ *Vide* the author's edition of the "Memoirs of Count de Gramont," where it is reproduced.

The famous silver looking-glasses given by the Duke to his mistress, now at Osterly Park, possibly once were at the same house.

George Bridges, the only son by her second husband, died in 1731 at the age of seventy-two. He was drowned in the lake which fronts the mansion in trying to save the life of a favourite dog. By the Earl she had two sons—Charles, afterwards created Duke, and John Talbot, who was slain in a duel by Charles II.'s son, the Duke of Grafton, in 1685. The Countess died in 1702, and her second husband eleven years later. Both were interred in the church of St. Giles-in-the Fields.





FRANCES JENNINGS, DUCHESS OF TYRCONNEL

ANNE TEMPLE, FRANCES JENNINGS, AND
GODITHA PRICE

OF the two pretty Maids of Honour of the Duchess of York, Anne Temple and Frances Jennings, the latter was the younger and more attractive. Both of them were fresh coloured, lively girls, but Miss Temple was dark compared with the other, who was extremely fair like her equally beautiful sister, Sarah, who married the famous Duke of Marlborough. Like her sister also, Frances Jennings had plenty of wit and had brilliant conversational powers to enhance her good looks, whereas her friend was both vain and silly.

Anthony Hamilton, who gives us a sketch of both, after describing Miss Temple's good figure, fine teeth, and languishing eyes, owns it difficult to describe the rest, for she was both simple and conceited, coquettish and prudent, and credulous and suspicious. Over the other he grows enthusiastic: her hair was the most beautiful flaxen; her mouth the handsomest in the world, and the modelling of her face and neck exquisite, and her complexion the brightest that ever was seen;

moreover, she was agreeable and unaffected, in short, the very ideal of "youthful poet's fancy."

The French Ambassador Courtin's eulogium is nearly as superlative. He describes her as one of the finest girls in England—*petite*, with a fine figure, splendid complexion, and lovely hair, which he compares to Madame de Longueville's—keen, brilliant eyes and the whitest and smoothest skin he ever saw.¹ Lionne's son, the young Marquis de Berni, who had come over to England in the spring of 1665 under the Ambassador's eye to see a little of the world, soon lost his heart. He was only nineteen and the little Jennings two years younger, and the calf-love of the pretty pair was watched with interest by the King and the Queen-mother and even the Duchess of York, who was usually severe on such matters. The Maid of Honour received daily visits and daily presents, but before the mutual attachment got really serious, Courtin stepped in and suggested that his *protégé* should divide his attentions among the other ladies. At length the little love affair having got sufficiently far to be interesting the young Marquis's sojourn came to an end, and with a sigh the two bid one another goodbye. On July 27th Lionne received the following from Courtin: "Thursday evening, the King of England teased very much in my presence Mrs. Genins [Jennings] on the subject of your son; the young girl reddened; she never appeared more beautiful. His

¹ "French Ambassador at the Court of Charles II.," p. 153.

Majesty told me that your son had asked M. Porter to let him know how she looked on the day he was gone ; and, at the same time, his Majesty assured me that he had never seen such a picture of sadness and desolation as the young gallant offered when on board the yacht of the Queen-mother. He was right, I can tell you, for the young lady loved him dearly." ¹ The incident of Miss Jennings and Miss Price disguising themselves as orange girls is recorded by Pepys as happening early in the same year : "What mad freaks the Mayds of Honour at Court have," he says ; "that Mrs. Jenings, one of the Duchesse's mayds, the other day dressed herself like an orange wench and went up and down and cried oranges ; till falling down, or by such accident, though in the evening, her fine shoes were discerned and she put to a great deal of shame." ²

The "Memoirs of Count de Gramont" furnish further details of the adventure. The two frolicsome ladies, being anxious to test the powers of the wonderful mountebank who had set up in Tower Street ³ and was astonishing all who went to consult him with his remarkable knowledge of their choicest secrets, followed the example of their maids who had previously been to consult him, and donning shabby attire, with each a basket of oranges in her arms, hired

¹ "French Ambassador at the Court of Charles II.," p. 157.

² *Diary*, February 21, 1665.

³ John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, impersonating "Alexander Bendo."

a hackney coach and drove eastwards. That afternoon their royal mistress had gone to the play and, as they were passing the vicinity of the theatre, the idea occurred to them that it would be immense fun to act up to their disguise and go and sell their goods in view of the whole house. Acting up to the suggestion, they dismissed their conveyance and walked to the entrance of the theatre, where they encountered the two gallants, Henry Killigrew and Henry Sidney, on the point of going in. The latter did not take any particular notice of them, but the former, being struck by Jennings' pretty face, entered into a most embarrassing conversation with her, at which, showing her resentment, she stood a great risk of revealing who she really was. The situation at last became so alarming that there was nothing for it but flight. But no sooner were they out of one difficulty than another presented itself. Having re-entered their coach, they were on the point of alighting somewhere in the vicinity of Tower Street when who should cross their path but Henry Brouncker, if anything a less desirable companion for unprotected females than even Killigrew. In the hopes of evading him they drove a little further, but when they got out they were horrified to find he had kept up with them, and they did their best to hide their faces. Such unlooked-for modesty in damsels of their calling aroused the old *roué's* curiosity, and looking hard at them, he at once saw who the pseudo-orange girls really were without in the least showing that he had



HENRY SIDNEY, EARL OF ROMNEY



recognised them. The situation was too novel to let them off lightly, so treating them as the characters they impersonated, Brouncker had the satisfaction of making them pay the reckoning of their folly by conversing with them far differently than was the custom with maids of honour.

After this second alarm Miss Jennings and Miss Price, abandoning the idea of visiting the fortune-teller, as soon as they were rid of their objectionable companion returned to their vehicle with all speed, but only to find that the driver was engaged in a battle royal with some boys who had attempted to make off with the oranges. "Their coachman being a man of spirit, it was with great difficulty they could persuade him to leave their oranges to the mob, that they might get off without any further disturbance. Having thus regained their vehicle after a thousand frights, and after having received an abundant share of the most low and infamous abuse applied to them during the fracas, they at length reached St. James's, vowing never more to go after fortune-tellers, through so many dangers, terrors and alarms, as they had lately undergone." ¹

The Miss Price alluded to was Goditha, the daughter of Sir Herbert Price, Master of the Household to Charles II., the sister of Henrietta Maria Price, the Queen's Maid of Honour. According to Pepys she was the Duke of York's mistress, although she was

¹ "Memoirs of Count de Gramont."

not openly acknowledged as such like Lady Denham.¹ Nor, indeed, by Hamilton's account, could she be compared with Lady Denham in point of beauty, but like the Duke's favourite, Catherine Sedley, she had wit to compensate, and though lacking in grace was of an amorous disposition. Jealous of any indiscretions of her own, the little love affairs of others were far from safe keeping when once she obtained knowledge of them, in fact she was almost as much of a mischief-maker as Count Gramont himself. Her sister, Henrietta, who has been confused with her, married Alexander Stanhope (son of Sir John Stanhope of Elvaston). She died in 1674. Goditha died unmarried four years later.²

The engraving by Bartolozzi, from an original painting by Lely (the existence of which we have failed to trace), certainly shows Miss Price to advantage: a very sweet face, attributable rather, perhaps, to the engraver than the artist.³ Lady Price, of whom a mezzotint engraving by Browne exists, must not be confounded with the sisters Price. Her father, Sir Edmund Warcup, according to Anthony Wood was ambitious enough to think that Charles II. would marry her.⁴

The father of Frances Jennings was Richard Jennings, or Jenyns, of Holywell House, near St. Albans

¹ Diary, June 10, 1666.

² *Vide* the author's edition of the "Memoirs," pp. 135, 136.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Wood's "Fasti Oxon.," vol. ii. p. 184.

(an old mansion rebuilt by his son-in-law, the Duke of Marlborough, and pulled down in 1837). His second wife, Frances, *née* Thornhurst, judging from her portrait at Althorp, was as unpleasant in appearance as she was unamiable in disposition. In 1676 we find the younger daughter's imperious and vindictive temper at open war with her mother. The latter, from experience, knew what sort of surroundings the beautiful Sarah would have in her official capacity as Maid of Honour, and very rightly kept a watch upon her. A temporary retirement of two of the maids prompted the mother to remove her child from similar temptations. "M^{is} Jennings and her daughter," writes Lady Chaworth on November 23rd, "Maid of Honour to the Dutchesse, have had so great a falling out that they fought; the young one complained to the D[uchess] that if her mother was not put out of St. James's, where she had lodgings to sanctuary her from debt, she would run away. So Sir Alleyn Apsley was sent to bid the mother remove, who answered with all her heart she should never dispute the Duke and Dutchesse's commands, but with the grace of God she would take her daughter away with her."¹ But a month later we learn from the same source that "M^{is} Sarah Jennings hath got the better of her mother, who is commanded to leave the Court and her daughter in itt, notwithstanding the mother's petition that she might have her girle with her, the girl saying she

¹ Belvoir MSS., Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 12, App. pt. ii. p. 32.

is a mad woman."¹ Miss Strickland says that though Charles II. was under some mysterious obligation to the elder lady, she was debarred from returning to Court owing to her infamous character.² Far from her fears respecting her daughter being realised, two years later she made the match which afterwards brought her into such prominence.

The elder daughter, meanwhile, having quite recovered from the favourable impression created by the romantic young Frenchman, as well as an infatuation for the lady-killer, Henry Jermyn, had some years before her sister's marriage become the wife of Sir George Hamilton, Anthony Hamilton's brother. He entered the French service in 1667, and was killed in the Battle of Saverne. Evelyn met her in 1676 at the house of the Countess of Berkeley. "There was in my Lady Ambassador's company³ my Lady Hamilton, a sprightly young lady, much in the good graces of the family, wife of that valiant and worthy gentleman, George Hamilton, not long after slain in the wars. She had been a Maid of Honour to the Duchess, and now turned papist."⁴ The attractive widow did not long wear her weeds. In 1679, a year after her sister's marriage with Colonel Churchill, she

¹ Belvoir MSS., Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 12, App. pt. ii. p. 34.

² "Lives of the Queens of England," vol. x. p. 249, and vol. xii. p. 206.

³ The Earl of Berkeley had been appointed Ambassador Extraordinary at Paris.

⁴ Evelyn's Diary, November 12, 1676.



FRANCES JENNINGS, DUCHESS OF TYRCONNEL.



became the wife of Colonel Richard Talbot, an old admirer who had buried his first wife, Katherine Boynton, one of the Queen's Maids of Honour. Long before the beautiful Sarah Jennings became a Duchess, Frances reached that distinction, although truly the title was conferred by James after his abdication. As Duke of Tyrconnel and Viceroy of Ireland, Talbot entertained the unfortunate King after the Battle of the Boyne. The Duchess's state reception at Dublin Castle of her once royal lover, whose *billets doux* she used to scatter to the winds, regardless of his feelings or into whose hands they fell, must have recalled to both their brighter butterfly days. The witty rebuff the dispirited King received when he complained of the conduct of the brave soldiers he had deserted is worth repeating. "Well, Madam," was his first observation when she and her retainers came forward to welcome him, "your countrymen run well." "Indeed, Sire," replied the Duchess with spirit, "but I am glad to see that you have won the race." At Malahide Castle, the old seat of the Talbots, this story is told in connection with the portrait of Tyrconnel's first wife, who erroneously is called the "witty Lady Talbot."¹ Katherine Boynton was a lisping, languishing, love-sick lady, the very reverse of Talbot's second wife.

After the siege of Limerick Tyrconnel followed the

¹ See "Historic Houses of the United Kingdom," 1892, pp. 94-95.

exiled King to France, but returned as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland early in 1691. His death, a few months afterwards, was attributed to poison said to have been administered to him in a cup of ratafia, but the real cause was a sudden attack of apoplexy after a heavy meal. The widowed Duchess retired to the Court of Saint-Germain and interested herself in the Jacobite cause, being dependent upon a small annuity, as her jointure in Ireland was in a precarious condition. Her visit to London incognito early in Queen Anne's reign, if the story be true, probably was for political purposes. "It is said," says Horace Walpole, "that the Duchess of Tyrconnel being reduced to absolute want on her arrival in England, and unable for some time to procure secret access to her family, hired one of the stalls under the Royal Exchange¹ and maintained herself by the sale of small articles of haberdashery. She wore a white dress wrapping her whole person, and a white mask which she never removed, and excited much interest and curiosity. 'The white widow,' as she was called, at length was recognised and found accommodation elsewhere."² After the death of James II. she lived some time in Brussels. Her famous brother-in-law saw her there in 1708, and wrote to the beautiful Sarah that her sister had aged considerably, and a good deal changed, but "very reasonable and kind." She was shortly going to pay a visit to Ireland to look after

¹ The New Exchange. (Pennant.)

² Pennant's "London."

her husband's property (which journey was facilitated by Marlborough's purse), and she hoped to also visit the Duchess at her house, near St. Albans.¹ Her visit seems to have been successful. Soon afterwards she settled in Dublin, having sufficient means to establish there a nunnery. Her death, which occurred in her eighty-second year, in her residence in Paradise Row, near Phoenix Park, was, says Walpole, "occasioned by her falling out of bed on the floor, on a winter's night, and being too feeble to rise or to call, was found in the morning so perished with cold that she died in a few hours."

Thus, in 1731, died one of the last survivors of the vivacious ladies who figure so prominently in Gramont's famous "Memoirs." In the chapel at Blenheim a pompous marble monument records the death of the great Duchess, her sister, who died in 1744, at the age of eighty-four, but in St. Patrick's Cathedral, where Frances Jennings was interred, there is no monument to her memory.²

There are portraits of the Duchess of Tyrconnel by Lely at Malahide Castle and Berkeley Castle, and by Mary Beale at Althorp. In the last, painted in William III.'s reign, she still looks young, and is not unlike a portrait by Kneller of her beautiful sister at Blenheim. She looks, however, more animated and less

¹ Jesse's "Memoirs of the Stuarts."

² Until 1860 there was a tablet to her memory in the Scottish College at Paris. See Steinman's "Althorp Memoirs," pp. 72, 73.

self-conscious than the imperious Sarah, whose hair is brushed back from her forehead, whereas Frances's fair hair is worn in wavy curls. But her luxuriant tresses are seen to better advantage in Varelst's portrait, which has been engraved, while the original painting, alas ! was destroyed in a fire at Ditton Park many years ago. A miniature of her also is preserved at Montagu House in the collection of the Duke of Buccleuch. The Duchess of Tyrconnel had five daughters. Hamilton's three girls were known as the three Viscountesses, having all married Irish peers (Viscount Ross, Viscount Dillon, and Viscount Kingsland). Of the other two, Talbot's eldest daughter, Charlotte, became Princess de Vintimiglia.

Having dispensed with Frances Jennings, we must return to her fellow Maid of Honour, Anne Temple.

This beauty, who was about the same age as her lively companion, was the daughter of a Warwickshire gentleman, Thomas Temple, of Frankton, by Rebecca, daughter of Sir Nicholas Carew. Being vain, and less worldly-wise than Frances Jennings, Miss Temple became an easy victim to flattery. Introduced to the gay Court at the age of sixteen, her head was soon turned by no less an adept in the art than Rochester, who with consummate skill wormed himself into her good graces by the verses he composed about her. The young Maid of Honour, however, was put upon her guard in time to prevent her from taking his adulation too seriously. He and the handsome Henry

Sidney, who posed as Rochester's rival for her good graces, were dismissed in favour of the far more serious-minded cavalier, Sir Charles Lyttelton.

Sir Charles, then a widower and more than double her age, had fought for the Royalist cause with Rochester's father at Worcester fight. At Hagley Hall, in Worcestershire,¹ where his second wife died in 1718,² the portraits of both hang above the staircase. He is represented in armour with a black page by his side. He has a shrewd, clever, sharp-featured face like his descendant, "the wicked lord," whose keen eyes seem to watch one narrowly out of his tall canvas. "La belle Temple" hangs so high that one can say little more than she looks very attractive, but distance may possibly lend enchantment to the view. In an unfinished miniature in Sir Charles Dilke's possession she has a round, roguish face, decidedly prepossessing and looking more life-like than many finished paintings of the period.³

¹ The grand old Tudor house, famous for the capture there of one of the gunpowder conspirators, was destroyed in 1758. It was succeeded by the present Georgian structure.

² She outlived her husband two years.

³ Reproduced in the author's edition of the "Memoirs of Count de Gramont."

THE BEAUTIFUL MYDDELTONS

THE famous beauty of Charles II.'s reign, Mrs. Myddelton, or Middleton, was the wife of Charles Myddelton, Esquire, the sixth son of the second Sir Thomas Myddelton, Knight, of Chirk Castle, Denbighshire, and the brother of the first baronet of that name. Sir Thomas, her father-in-law, had fought bravely in the civil wars, having been twice besieged in his own castle, and once compelled to besiege it himself.¹ The old soldier had first espoused the Parliamentary side, but afterwards declared for Charles II., whom he lived to see restored to his throne.

Mrs. Myddelton's father was Sir Robert Needham (not Sir Roger, as sometimes stated), also a knight of Welsh extraction, and related through his first wife, Elizabeth Hartop, to John Evelyn, who refers in his diary to the daughter as "that famous and indeed incomparable beauty." Her mother was Sir Robert's second wife, the daughter of William Cockayne, and had previously married a Mr. Worfield.

Of the beauty's younger sister, Eleanor, we shall

¹ "A Memoir of Chirk Castle," by Richard Myddelton, Esq.



JANE MYDDELTON



speak presently. She must not be confused with another Eleanor Needham, also a famous beauty, who became the second wife of the first Lord Byron. Her father was also a Robert Needham, Viscount Kilmurrey, perhaps a relative of Sir Robert's. She was a widow when she married Lord Byron in 1644 (her first husband being Peter Warburton). Pepys, on the authority of Evelyn, does not speak in too high terms of this lady, although her own terms appear to have been somewhat high. She had the distinction of being Charles II.'s seventeenth mistress during his exile in France, and, says our authority, "did not leave him till she had got him to give her an order for four thousand pounds' worth of plate to be made for her, but by delays, thanks be to God! she died before she had it."¹ Her ladyship died in 1663. The fine portrait of Lady Bellasys, who figures in "the Beauty Room" at Hampton Court, although she can scarcely claim that honour, used to be named "Lady Byron" in error.² The personal attractions of both, whatever they may have been, belong rather to the time of the Civil Wars than the time of the Restoration, although the widowed Lady Bellasys, who was the Duke of York's mistress, might have become his second wife had not Charles persuaded him not "to play the fool again."³

¹ Pepys, April 26, 1667.

² See Ernest Law's "Historical Catalogue," p. 58.

³ Burnett's "Own Time," 1838 ed. p. 233.

Mrs. Jane Myddelton was married at Lambeth (in which parish she was born) in June, 1660, her age then being about fifteen. She had not figured much at Whitehall during the first two years after the Restoration. When Count Gramont arrived in England she was in her seventeenth year, and a coquette with no lack of admirers.

The most pleasing portrait of the beauty is handed down to us in a miniature by Petitot, which once belonged to Horace Walpole, and sold at the famous Strawberry Hill sale for the small sum of eleven guineas. One recognises a strong likeness to this in Lely's fine paintings at Althorp, and that in the Imperial Collection at St. Petersburg (removed from Houghton Hall in 1779). The Lely at Hampton Court (of which there are replicas at Kingston Lacy and Dalkeith Palace), painted in 1663, when she was eighteen years of age, looks less like Gramont's description than that in the National Portrait Gallery, the pose of which is full of affectation.¹

"She was well made," says the Count, "fair and delicate ; but had in her behaviour and discourse some-

¹ The change in the colour of the hair from auburn to golden is easier to be accounted for than the colour of the eyes from hazel to blue. The portrait of Mrs. Myddelton, or Middleton, at Rothamsted, Herts, represents one of Jane Myddelton's six sisters-in-law. Sir Charles Lawes-Wittewronge's ancestress, Anna Wittewronge, *née* Van Acker, was the fourth wife of the first Sir Thomas Myddelton, Knight, of Chirk Castle. Sir John Wittewronge, her son, the Parliamentarian General, married one of her step-daughters.



MRS. MYDDELTON



thing precise and affected. The indolent airs she gave herself did not please everybody ; people grew weary of those sentiments of delicacy which she endeavoured to explain without understanding them herself ; and instead of entertaining, she became tiresome. In these attempts she gave herself so much trouble that she made the company uneasy, and her ambition to pass for a wit only established for her the reputation of being tiresome, which lasted much longer than her beauty." Still, at the age of thirty her good looks were by no means on the downward path. Courtin, the French Ambassador, declared her, in 1676, to be then the most beautiful woman at Court, and what was more, the most amiable. High bred, talented, modest, and unassuming, in short, he says, the sweetest woman he had ever come across in any foreign country.¹ Gramont, naturally, was somewhat bitter as his advances did not make the rapid progress he would have desired. His mode of ingratiating himself was to lavish presents, and in this instance he complains that the lady was willing enough to accept, giving far from equivalent returns. But we get a side light from another quarter, by which the beauty's coldness may be explained. The gifts presumably went astray in transmission ! Cominges, the French Ambassador in 1663, says in a despatch : " He (Gramont) has just managed to have a very ridiculous affair with Madame Middleton, whose maid he bribed, but the maid kept to herself both the money

¹ "Louise de Keroualle," p. 163.

and the love declarations of the Chevalier. When at length the lady heard of what was meant for her, as it was not conveyed, it seems, with all the eloquence Gramont had meant, she was nothing moved, but ordered him to keep quiet and look elsewhere."¹ The Count no doubt hurt her feelings by offering her money. He had noticed her wish to vie with her wealthier rivals, for she was poor, and to make no mistake the second time, must have sent the gift direct. "She is not mercenary," says her fairer judge, Courtin, "and once refused a purse containing fifteen hundred gold angels, which Gramont offered her."²

It is somewhat remarkable that so great a beauty as Mrs. Myddelton should not have attracted the notice of Mr. Pepys before 1665. On March 22nd, going to St. James's, "saw Mrs. Middleton," he says, "a very great beauty I never knew or heard of before." But thenceforward he had his eyes open. At the Park in the April following, he distinguishes her out from the rest of the ladies, and on several other occasions, at church or at the play, he was greatly gratified when she was present. Out of her many worshippers, "watch-dogs," as Courtin calls them, the Earl of Sandwich's brother, Ralph Montagu (afterwards created Earl and Duke of Montagu) met with the most approval, although she had a smile to spare for most men, but it is doubtful whether he or Clarendon's second son,

¹ "French Ambassador at Court of Charles II.," p. 93.

² "Louise de Keroualle," pp. 156, 157.

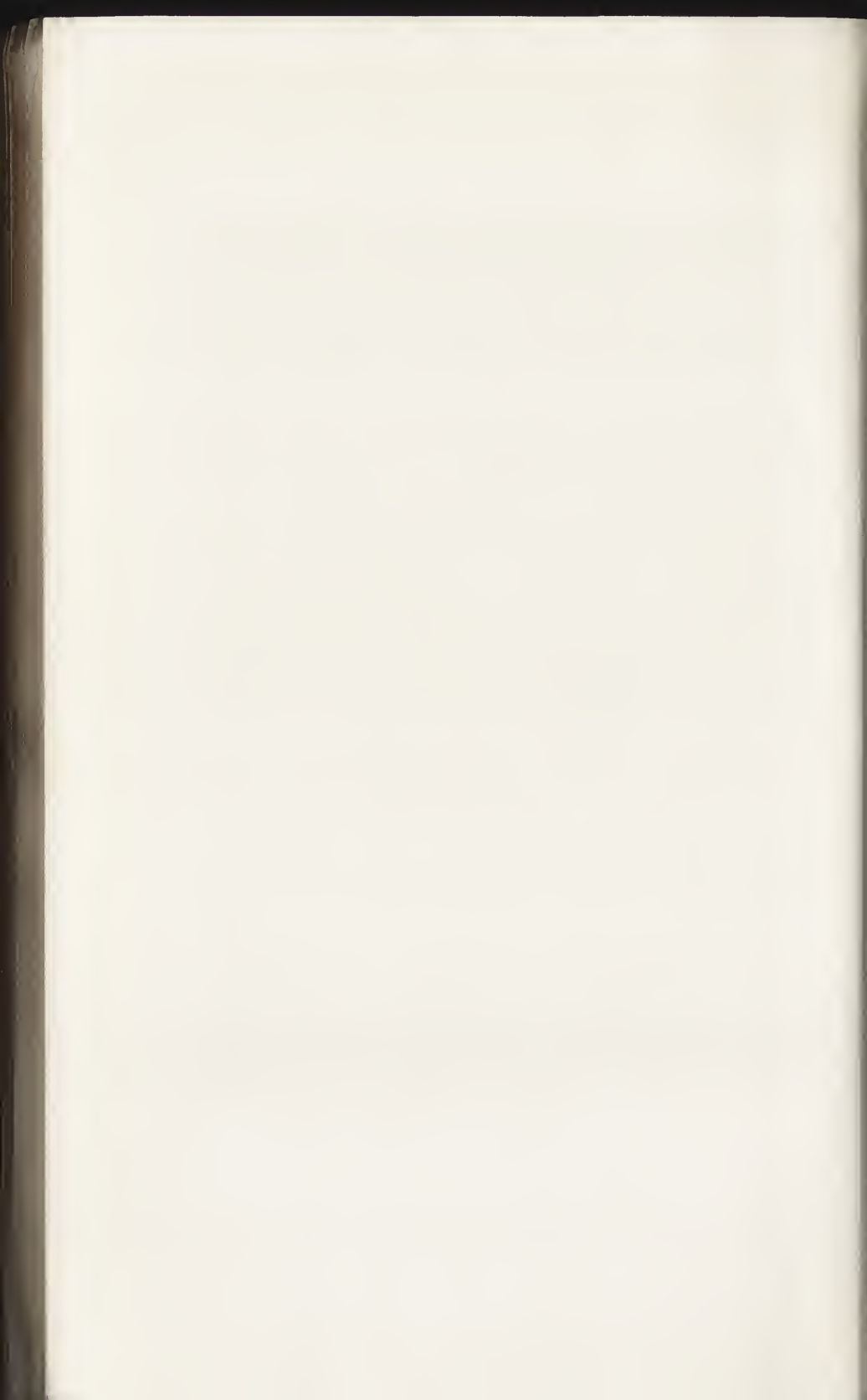




JANE MYDDELTON
(MRS. MAY)



FRANCES WHITMORE, LADY MYDDELTON





MRS. LANGLEY



Lawrence Hyde, was uppermost in her favour. Waller, the poet, also admired her, and when she visited the Duke of Buckingham at Cliveden, invariably came over from Beconsfield to be one of the party. The lampoons and state poems of the period do not handle her name too delicately in regard to either,¹ indeed, in 1679 it is stated she had ambitious aspirations to succeed the Duchess of Portsmouth. Here, however, the confusion caused by the appellation "Mrs." to single ladies raises the question as to whether the beauty's daughter was not the lady referred to, which seems not unlikely, as the year before the French Ambassador, Barrillon, remarks that there was a plot on the part of Mrs. Myddelton and her friend, Lady Harvey, to undermine the Duchess of Portsmouth's power by getting the King "to honour Mrs. Myddelton's daughter with his attentions." The French mistress, however, hearing of the scheme, had sufficient power to put a stop to such proceedings.²

This junior Jane Myddelton was born at the close of 1661, and inherited her mother's good looks. She married, in Queen Anne's reign,³ Charles, the son of Sir Algernon May, of Hampton, in which church she was buried in 1740. She had a younger sister, Althamia, of whom nothing is known. Their grandparents, Sir Robert Needham and his wife, died within three days of one another in October, 1666,

¹ See "Poems on State Affairs," 1703, vol. i. pp. 132-217.

² "Louise de Keroualle," p. 202.

³ 1710.

and lie buried in the pretty Bedfordshire village of Clophill.

Eleanor Needham was five years younger than her sister Jane, and although her beauty has not been handed down to us by any portraits, she must have been equally favoured to have captivated the heart of the Duke of Monmouth, who was somewhat of a connoisseur in matters feminine. We gather from one of John Verney's letters in 1675, that she had so far participated in the Duke's disgrace that she had brought it upon herself. "Some say Miss Needham, with whom the Duke of Monmouth was catch'd abroad, is taken again at Court."¹ These little matters were soon rectified: a temporary absence and all was forgotten and forgiven! After the Rye House plot, when Monmouth was conspicuous by his absence, a warrant for high treason being out against him, an eye was kept on a house in Russell Street, Bloomsbury, where the lady lived. Although by outward appearances it had been shut up and uninhabited for some time, a spy reported that "Mrs. Needham (the Duke of M's Miss)² was observ'd to give a kind of signal knock at the dore and she was immediately admitted, the person not seen that open'd the dore."³

¹ Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 7, App. p. 465.

² Observe more confusion over Miss and Mrs. As will be seen, Verney gives the correct prefix.

³ *Vide* "King Monmouth," p. 158.



MAJOR-GENERAL JAMES CROFTS



Eleanor had four children by the Duke, who took his original surname of Crofts. At Dalkeith Palace there is a portrait of the eldest, Colonel James Crofts, in the military costume of Queen Anne's time, bearing in his handsome face a distinct likeness to his father. He, or his brother Henry, is probably alluded to in a letter from Waller, the original of which was addressed to Mrs. Myddelton's married daughter, Mrs. May. "The King," he says he hears, "has a grandchild that waytes on his ma^{ty} at the race at Burford."¹ The Colonel's daughter, Maria Julia Crofts, complicated relationships by marrying Monmouth's illegitimate son by Lady Wentworth. Henrietta, the elder of the two daughters of Eleanor Needham, who became Duchess of Bolton, also bore a striking resemblance to her father, and on the strength of her paternity is said to have given herself rather regal airs. Her mother married an Irish gentleman named South, by whom she had another daughter.²

Eleanor lived into Anne's reign, but the date of her decease is not recorded. Jane, her beautiful sister, died in 1692, and was buried at Lambeth, but there is no monumental stone to her memory. The Secret Service disbursements of James II. show that Mrs. Myddelton was among the many recipients of a pension, while her sister's name does not figure until William's reign. The cause is pretty clear. James was a former

¹ Egerton MSS., No. 922.

² *Vide* "King Monmouth," pp. 361, 362.

admirer (though it must be admitted at a distance) of Jane, while her sister's name was too closely connected with his treasonable nephew to bear a pleasant memory.

The mansion, Plas-Newydd (formerly called Plas-Baddy), built by Mrs. Myddelton's husband, is still in a good state of preservation, and bears over the porch the Myddelton arms. The grand old fortress, Chirk Castle, Denbighshire, came into possession of the family in Elizabeth's reign, although ancestors, the great Mortimers, had held the estate four centuries before. The paintings of several seventeenth-century beauties adorn those formidable walls, and the majority are Myddeltons, although the lovely Jane herself is not represented. Lely's portrait (in the red drawing-room) of her sister-in-law, Mary Cholmondeley,¹ Lady Myddelton (the first baronet's first wife), is particularly attractive. Her daughters-in-law, Frances Whitmore (the wife of her fourth son, Sir Richard Myddelton²) and Elizabeth Wilbraham,

¹ Daughter of Sir Thomas Cholmondeley of Vale Royal.

² She died in 1694, aged 28. There is a fine portrait of her by Kneller at Plas Power (near Wrexham), as well as of her sister, Mrs. Langley, also a beauty. A third portrait inscribed "Jane Myddelton, wife of Charles Myddleton," judging from the costume and mode of wearing the hair as well as from the youthful appearance of the lady, must be the *daughter* of Mrs. Jane Myddelton the beauty. A replica of Lely's Lady Whitmore at Hampton Court and at Chirk Castle, is also wrongly inscribed "Margaret Brooke, Lady Denham."



MARY CHOLMONDELEY, LADY MYDDELTON



Lady Myddelton (the first wife of the second baronet),¹ were also great beauties. The first of these two Ladies Myddelton must not be confused with her mother, Frances, Lady Whitmore, one of the handsome Brooke sisters of de Gramont fame, and sister of Margaret, Lady Denham. In all probability the "Lady Middleton" who forms one of the Kneller Beauties in William III.'s Presence Chamber at Hampton Court, was the second Lady Myddelton referred to above. She is the prettiest of these eight full-length portraits,² which were painted to rival the Lely series of the generation before.

Neither of James II.'s wives added to their popularity in their selection, especially Mary of Modena, who included herself, which plain Anne Hyde could not honestly do. The old Countess of Carlisle (the daughter of the first Earl of Essex of the Capels, who was implicated in the Rye House plot) told Horace Walpole that she remembered how Lady Dorchester had advised the Queen against the idea of picking out her prettiest Maids of Honour thus to be immortalised. "Surely, madam," she said, "if the King was to ask for the portraits of all the wits in his

¹ In her marble monument in Chirk Church she is represented with her infant son in her arms, who only lived a few days. Sir Thomas's sons by his second wife, Charlotte Bridgeman, all died young. Their sister Charlotte married the Earl of Warwick, and subsequently Addison, the poet.

² Originally there were twelve.

Court, would not the rest think he called them fools ?”¹ The observation calls to mind the famous Kit-Kat portraits of a few years later, the wits whose toasting glasses record the names of the beauties of James II.’s Court as well as those of William and Anne. Long since removed from their historic home at Barn Elms, this splendid collection of Knellers may still be seen at Bayfordbury, the seat of the descendant of old Jacob Tonson, the secretary of the famous club, whose portrait is perhaps the most vigorous and life-like of the set. The room in this secluded Hertfordshire house abounds in historical association. We brush shoulders with the geniuses Congreve, Addison, Steele, Vanbrugh ; with the rakes Wharton, Mohun, Dorset ; and vain fops such as the proud Duke of Somerset and the painter himself : celebrities mostly of Queen Anne’s reign, but in touch with that of Charles II.

¹ “Anecdotes of Painting in England.”





ELIZABETH BUTLER,
COUNTESS OF CHESTERFIELD

THE COUNTESES OF CHESTERFIELD AND SOUTHESK

TWO of the most pronounced coquettes in the Court of the Merry Monarch were undoubtedly Elizabeth Butler, Countess of Chesterfield, and Anne Hamilton, Countess of Southesk. There were few beauties at Whitehall with whom the long faced, melancholy James, when he was Duke of York, had not been smitten, and when any lady more than ordinarily attracted his attention, he had a habit of ogling which to many was most objectionable. Still there were of course exceptions, and two of them were the married ladies referred to.

Philip Stanhope, second Earl of Chesterfield, was notorious for his gallantries, and before he married his second wife Elizabeth Butler, daughter of James, Duke of Ormonde, Anne Hamilton figured among his flames. Allusion to her has already been made in the memoir of Barbara Villiers, Countess of Castlemaine, to whom Chesterfield was paying court at the same time. Her father was the gallant cavalier who was killed at Worcester fight, and the widowed Duchess of Hamilton

probably had her suspicions and fears of her daughter's close friendship with the flighty Barbara Villiers, for the correspondence which passed between Anne Hamilton and the Earl shows that their meetings had been put a stop to. "I have to good an opinion of you," the beauty wrote in one of her letters (1658), "not to beleive you gratefull, and that made mee think you would not be satisfied if I should leave you for ever without a farewell ; and since I shall not be in a capacity of giving you one as I would, I thought fitt to send you this advertisement that you may give mee some adieus with your eyes, since it is to be done noe other way."¹

Her union to Robert, Lord Carnegie, son of the Earl of Southesk, was evidently one of those marriages of convenience which result in unpleasant complications. Chesterfield was one of the most polished men of fashion, but Carnegie was somewhat of a rough diamond, finding his pleasures more in coarse society than in refined circles. His wife, far from fretting at the want of his company, was more inconvenienced when he was at home. The attentions of the King's brother had flattered her ladyship, and she gave him all the encouragement he could have wished.

The Duke, in his visits to Southesk's house, was so far cautious as to preserve decorum by taking a friend with him, but it did not follow that the companion was admitted into his Royal Highness's strict confidence.

¹ Letter-Book of Philip, second Earl of Chesterfield.

Upon one occasion Sir William Talbot's son Richard, gentleman of the bedchamber to the Duke (whose services, according to Bishop Burnet, were used upon such occasions), accompanied his master upon one of these semi-official visits, but having recently returned from abroad, he had not heard that his friend Carnegie was now Earl of Southesk, nor indeed did he trouble his head who Lady Southesk was with whom the Duke was infatuated. The episode is best described by Count Gramont: "A few days after his arrival he was carried, merely to keep up appearances, to her [Lady Southesk's] house by the Duke; and after being introduced and some compliments having been paid on both sides, he thought it his duty to give his Royal Highness an opportunity to pay his compliments, and accordingly retired into the ante-chamber which looked into the street, and placed himself at the window to view the people as they passed. He was one of the best meaning men in the world on such occasions, but was so subject to forgetfulness and absence of mind, that he once forgot, and left behind him at London, a complimentary letter which the Duke had given him for the Infanta of Portugal, and never recollected till he was going to his audience. He stood sentry, as we have before said, very attentive to his instructions, when he saw a coach stop at the door, without being in the least concerned at it and still less at a man whom he saw get out of it, and whom he immediately heard coming upstairs. The devil who ought to be civil

[cautious] on such occasions forgot himself in the present instance and brought up Lord Southesk *in propria personâ*. His Royal Highness's equipage had been sent home, because my lady had assured him that her husband was gone to see a bear and bull-baiting, an entertainment in which he took great delight, and from whence he seldom returned until it was very late ; so that Southesk, not seeing any equipage at the door, little imagined that he had such good company in his house, but if he was surprised to see Talbot carelessly lolling in his wife's ante-chamber, his surprise was soon over. Talbot, who had not seen him since they were in Flanders, and never supposing that he had changed his name, ' Welcome, Carnegie, welcome, my good fellow,' said he, giving him his hand, ' where the devil have you been that I have never been able to set eyes on you since we were at Brussels ? What business brought you here ? Do you likewise wish to see Lady Southesk ? If this is your intention, my poor friend, you may go away again, for I must inform you the Duke of York is in love with her, and I will tell you in confidence that at this very time he is in her chamber.'¹ Strange to say his injured lordship did not then and there seek redress, but returned to his coach internally vowing vengeance, and when Talbot and the Duke compared notes afterwards their feelings may be imagined. The adventure in any case had the beneficial result of breaking off the liaison.

¹ "Memoirs of Count de Gramont."

Pepys speaks of her ladyship before she became Countess. Riding through Hyde Park in March, 1664-65, he saw her with many other "brave ladies," among whom "Castlemaine lay impudently upon her back in her coach asleep, with her mouth open!" And in November, 1668, he distinguished her among other beauties in the boxes at the Duke's Theatre as being "most devilishly painted."

In 1670 Lady Chaworth, writing to her brother Lord Roos, says, "They say Lady Southaske is drowned going into Scotland to sue for allimony."¹ The report of the Countess's decease, however, was unfounded. She died about eleven years later at the age of forty-one, and her husband in 1688.

The only really authentic portrait of her is preserved at the Forfarshire seat of the Carnegies, Kinnaird Castle. It is a life size by Lely representing her as Venus, with her son Charles (afterwards the fourth Earl) as Cupid kneeling beside her. The painting by Lely at Hampton Court of Frances Brooke, Lady Whitmore, of whom we speak elsewhere, was engraved for Mrs. Jameson's "Beauties of the Court of Charles II.," as Anne, Countess of Southesk, mainly on the assumption that a replica of it at Narford Hall was so named. The Hampton Court painting, however, was one of the original set of Lely beauties, being named in James II.'s catalogue as "Lady Denham's sister," whereas the Countess of Southesk's portrait

¹ Belvoir MSS., Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 12, App. pt. ii. p. 17.

never formed one of them. "The girlish and almost rustic simplicity of the face," Mrs. Jameson was forced to admit, strangely belied the character of the lady she would have it represent.¹ There is another engraving wrongly named "the Countess of Southesk," viz., by Bocquet, which appeared in the 1811 edition of the "Memoirs of Count de Gramont." The original painting from which this was copied is unquestionably Barbara Villiers, Countess of Castlemaine, the well-known portrait of the head resting on the hand, of which there are so many replicas.

In Mrs. Jameson's work a more unpardonable error occurs. Illustrating the memoir of the Countess of Chesterfield, Elizabeth Butler, the second wife of the second Earl, we have an engraving of his *third* wife whom he married in 1669, Lady Elizabeth Dormer, daughter and co-heir to the Earl of Carnarvon. The original painting by Lely at Narford, as Mrs. Jameson says, is unquestionably the Countess of Chesterfield, but not the lady of whom she writes, who was a very pronounced coquette to say the least of it, whereas the third Countess's character was irreproachable. When the Earl a third time was left a widower the calamity fell much more heavily upon him than the loss of his second wife in 1665. The cause of his indifference towards her will be seen later. A coldness towards her had existed almost from the

¹ See Jameson's "Beauties of the Court of Charles II.," 1861 ed., p. 229.

time of his marriage in 1659, and this may perhaps be accounted for owing to his infatuation with the beautiful Barbara Villiers, not to mention many other ladies about this period. As time went on, however, his wife also became not only indifferent, but her wholesale flirtations caused him considerable uneasiness.

With a couple so constituted it is little wonder that domestic disagreements resulted. The Duchess of Ormonde, the Earl's mother-in-law, naturally took her daughter's part, and brought the following polished effusion, for Chesterfield was almost as complete a letter writer as the fourth Earl.

“After the having been so long in a mist of misfortunes, and the being so misunderstood that I hardly hoped to refind the way to your Grace's favour, it was far from an unwelcomed light that I received by your ladyship's letter; whereby I see you are pleased to suspend a judgment, which, if once given, I should no longer plead but condemn myselfe. Madam, I doe not love the remembrance of old greefs, and yet the best way of curing wounds is to search their bottoms, and when that has been done before your ladyship and my lord, I shall freely forgive the uneasiness they have put mee to.”¹

The trouble this time had resulted from the unwelcome attentions of the Duke of York, whom Pepys tells us, in November of the previous year, was so much

¹ Letter-Book of Philip, second Earl of Chesterfield, pp. 125, 126.

“smitten in love with my Lady Chesterfield . . . that the Duchess of York hath complained to the King and her father about it, and my Lady Chesterfield is gone into the country for it.”¹

But according to Gramont, her ladyship was in town in December, and the following month at the time of the Russian Ambassador’s visit : but in May she was removed to Bretby, the Earl’s seat in Derbyshire.

This act of Chesterfield’s in removing his wife from temptations, and perhaps disgrace, was looked upon as tyranny, and brought upon his shoulders a volley of sarcastic wit and abuse, but his position for all that was far more dignified than in all probability it would have been had his wife continued at Court. “This day” (January 19, 1662–63), says Pepys, “by Dr. Clarke I was told the occasion of my Lord Chesterfield going and taking his lady (my Lord Ormond’s daughter) from Court. It seems he not only hath been long jealous of the Duke of York, but did find them two talking together, though there were others in the room, and the lady, by all opinions, a most good, virtuous woman. He the next day (of which the Duke was warned by somebody that saw the passion my Lord Chesterfield was in the night before) went and told the Duke how much he did apprehend himself wronged in his picking out his lady of the whole Court to be the subject of his dishonour ; which the Duke did answer with great calmness, not seeming to under-

¹ November 3, 1662.



JAMES II



stand the reason of the complaint, and that was all that passed ; but my Lord did presently pack his lady into the country in Derbyshire, near the Peake, which is become a proverb at Court to send a man's wife to the Devil's Peake when she vexes him."

To a lively young woman of twenty-three, for that was her age in 1663, both fond of and accustomed to men's homage and flattery, the lonely seat of the Chesterfields must have been a dismal abode after the brilliance and gaiety of the saloons of Whitehall. The mansion was old and ruinous, for the Earl had not yet started his lavish restorations and improvements which in later years made it one of the most sumptuous edifices in England.¹

One can almost picture the young Countess in her gloomy but picturesque surroundings, like Amy Robsart at Cumnor, thinking of her happier days. But two years sufficed for her. At the end of the second she was dead, and stories got about of poison, though they were based on no foundation. Surely the flippant Earl must have thought of his second Countess when he wrote the following lines to the Countess of Devonshire some years afterwards : "Tho' Hardwicke is one of the finest and noblest places in England, yet I doubt that Darbyshire can afford but small divertions to

¹ Chesterfield, writing in 1681 to Lord Arlington, says : "I have been employed all this summer in rebuilding of my ruinous house, and I hope to finish by the latter end of this month, and soon after to begin my journey to London." (Letter-Book of Philip, second Earl of Chesterfield, p. 208.)

ladyes in the winter, except they are able, like your ladyship, to please and entertaine themselves with their own thoughts, which is a blessing that heaven doth not often give." ¹ In any case it was probably not so with Elizabeth Butler, who, though naturally lively, was sure to pine for want of admiration. We have a picture of her from Hamilton's lively pen and from Lely's dainty brush, as well as a life-like miniature from the truthful hand of the inimitable Samuel Cooper.

In regard to good looks the second Countess of Chesterfield was less prepossessing than the Earl's first and third wives, as may be judged from Lady Anne Percy's portrait (by Lely) at Petworth, and Elizabeth Dormer's portrait (by Lely) at Narford.

In the painting at Chevening, her modest and somewhat simpering air looks a trifle assumed, but her face is sweet and her eyes are expressive. In Cooper's miniature, in the Earl of Carlisle's possession, she looks much more serious minded and decidedly delicate.² She was, says Gramont, "one of the most agreeable women in the world. She had a most exquisite shape though she was not very tall. Her complexion was extremely fair, with all the expressive charms of a brunette. She had large blue eyes, very tempting and alluring; her manners were engaging; her wit lively and amusing; but her heart,

¹ Letter-Book of Philip, second Earl of Chesterfield, p. 146.

² These two paintings are reproduced in the author's edition of the "Memoirs of Count de Gramont."

ever open to tender sentiments, was neither scrupulous in point of constancy, nor nice in point of sincerity" . . . "she was endowed with great sensibility and delicacy" . . . and "knew how to heighten her charms with all the bewitching attractions in the power of a woman to invent, who wishes to make a conquest."

This power her ladyship exercised among others upon her cousin-german, James Hamilton, Anthony Hamilton's brother, eldest son of Sir George Hamilton, who out of jealousy for his royal rival is said to have suggested her ladyship's removal into the country. But she had her revenge; the trick she played upon him to cure him of his vanity was one of the diversions she had recourse to in her enforced seclusion in Derbyshire. Soon after her departure from London, Hamilton received a letter from the Countess bitterly complaining of her melancholy surroundings: with impassable roads, rocks, and precipices without, and the eyes of a jealous and suspicious husband within the walls of her lonely dwelling. The letter concluded with an alluring invitation, her lord being called away for a week to attend a law-suit in Chester.

In those lively days, honour or bonds of relationship rarely interfered with delicate matters of the heart. Needless to say, Hamilton went off post-haste for the wild districts of the Peak, and with little difficulty discovered the prearranged trysting place. This was a small hut or cottage on the outskirts of the park. From

here he was conducted by a servant from the house to the door of a little building adjoining the garden, and told to wait. Time went on, but the door remained closed. It was winter, and as night drew on the ardour which hitherto had withstood many discomforts at length began to flag, and after some hours' exposure in the biting cold his spirits broke down altogether. With the first symptoms of daylight, worn out with waiting, he made his way once more across the park to the little cottage, wondering what could have prevented the Countess from keeping her appointment, or at least sending him a message.

“Then he laid himself down in one of the worst beds in the world, and slept as sound as if he had been in the best. He supposed that he should not be awakened, except either by a letter or a message from Lady Chesterfield ; but he had scarce slept two hours when he was roused by the sound of the horn and the cry of the hounds. The hut which afforded him a retreat joining, as we before said, to the park wall, he called his host, to know what was the occasion of that hunting, which made a noise as if the whole pack of hounds had been in his bedchamber. He was told that it was my lord hunting a hare in his park. ‘What lord?’ said he, in great surprise. ‘The Earl of Chesterfield,’ replied the peasant. He was so astonished at this that at first he hid his head under the bedclothes, under the idea that he already saw him entering with all his hounds ; but as soon as he had a

little recovered himself he began to curse capricious fortune, no longer doubting but this jealous fool's return had occasioned all his tribulations in the preceding night."¹

But Hamilton was soon disillusioned on this point. A note arrived not from Lady Chesterfield, but from a third party, explaining the trick that had been played upon him. His first thought was vengeance, but the recollection of the proximity of Lord Chesterfield and his hounds suggested the wiser course of flight. Nor was his punishment yet complete, for the King got wind of the story, and the hero of it had to relate it for the amusement of the Court.

The present house of Bretby was built about a hundred years ago. The older mansion (in which was incorporated the remains of a fortress of still earlier date) was pulled down in 1780.² Lord Chesterfield, who lived in retirement there in his later years, rebuilt a great part of it, and planned the old gardens after the style of Versailles, with fountains, labyrinths, groves, greenhouses, grottoes, aviaries, carpet-walks, orange-trees, water-works, marble summer-houses, &c.³ At the time of his death it was a very different place than what it had been during the enforced retirement of his second Countess. Nor did his third wife have any particular

¹ "Memoirs of Count de Gramont."

² See Kip's view of it in the author's edition of the "Memoirs of Count de Gramont."

³ Lysons' "Derbyshire," p. 240.

fondness for the place : "You know Darbysher is a dull place," she wrote to Mrs. Culpepper, "and needs something to make it pleasint. I will assure you I know nothing will please me better than hearing from you, writ whatever you will. I suppose my Lady Dencell's discretion will lett her be a little decent this winter. Pray God she be not condennd to Darbysher at last for ever, as sune body was about ten or twelf yeare agoe, for that — gallant's mistress have that ill for them if they doe not behave themselves wisely, they are packed out of their heaven London."¹ The misdeeds of her predecessor and her punishment are here unmistakably alluded to. She did not, however, die at Bretby, but at Wellingborough, where she had gone to take the waters, owing to her delicate state of health.

¹ Jameson's "Beauties of the Court of Charles II.," 1862 ed., p. 200.





MARGARET BROOKE, LADY DENHAM

THE MISSES BROOKE, MISS FRASER, AND
MRS. LAWSON

TWO of the original set of "Windsor Beauties" at Hampton Court represent the sisters Brooke, Frances and Margaret, the second and youngest daughters of Sir William Brooke, the grandson of William Brooke, Lord Cobham, and Penelope, daughter of Sir Moyses Hill. The eldest of their three daughters was named Hill.

Of these two beauties, Margaret, the youngest (not Elizabeth, as she has frequently been called), was the handsomest, although, judging by these two portraits, her elder sister, Frances, looks the less insipid of the two. The engraving of the latter portrait in Mrs. Jameson's "Beauties of the Court of Charles II.," it may be pointed out, bears scarcely any likeness to the original, one of the many examples where we are given an entirely false impression of the character.¹ One notices a family likeness in the original canvases,

¹ This has been wrongly engraved in Mrs. Jameson's work as the Countess of Southesk (see *ante*, p. 267).

especially the strongly-marked eyebrows and dark brown eyes of the sisters.

Of the career of Frances Brooke we know but little beyond the fact that, as a young girl, she and her younger sister were introduced to Court by the Earl of Bristol, the brother-in-law of their stepfather, Edward Russell, the son of Francis, fourth Earl of Bedford.

The Earl of Bristol, who had succeeded to the title in 1653, was one of those noblemen who, in a great measure, won royal favour by pandering to the King's pleasures. It was at his sumptuous entertainments that the Merry Monarch first saw the two pretty sisters, and was struck by the beauty of the younger, who was then only eighteen. She was a coquette, and by no means averse to attentions from so high a quarter. But Lady Castlemaine, fearing a dangerous rival, soon put a stop to her advances; so the damsel, finding she could not have the King as a lover, had to content herself with the homage of his brother James. The ambition of her elder sister, Frances, did not fly so high, at least there is no record that she encouraged the suit of anybody in particular, excepting Sir Thomas Whitmore, the member of an old Shropshire family, whom she married.¹

The marriage of Margaret Brooke to Sir John Denham, the poet, in 1665, when she was scarcely out

¹ Her daughter Frances married Sir Richard Myddelton, nephew of the husband of the famous beauty, Mrs. Myddelton. She also was a beauty (see *ante*, pp. 260-1).



FRANCES BROOKE, LADY WHITMORE



of her teens and he over fifty,¹ could hardly be expected to have been a happy one, although he had money to counterbalance the disadvantage of years. More given to dreaming than the majority of bards, this eccentric knight may not have noticed that he had a rival in the Duke of York. Be that as it may be, he soon got a rude awakening, for barely a year after he was united to the beauty, her ambition was to be publicly acknowledged as the Duke's mistress! On June 10, 1666, Pepys says: "The Duke of Yorke is wholly given up to his new mistresse, my Lady Denham, going at noon-day with all his gentlemen with him to visit her in Scotland Yard; she declaring she will not be his mistresse as Mrs. Price, to go up and down the privy stairs, but will be owned publicly; and so she is." The diarist happened to see her three months later on one of his visits to Whitehall, and was scandalised by the Duke of York "taking her aside and talking to her in the sight of all the world, all alone."²

But what was Sir John about that he should have apparently kept his eyes closed? He, of all men, should have been upon his guard, as his caustic wit had invariably been directed against husbands who had been thus victimised. He was not the sort of man to make light of his own dishonour; it so worked upon his mind that for some considerable time he lost his

¹ In some contemporary writings he is made out to be much older than he really was.

² Diary, September 26, 1666.

reason. His actual insanity, however, may be attributed to the premature death of his wife, which occurred early in January, 1667, she then being only twenty-one years of age. In many respects her death recalls that of Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans, for it was generally supposed that her husband had poisoned her; and although there was no foundation for the scandalous report, Lady Denham, like the Duchess, quite believed that the agony she suffered was not attributable to natural causes. The latter's death, however, was much more sudden than in the case of Lady Denham, who lingered after her first seizure for nearly two months! On November 10, 1666, Pepys says: "I hear my Lady Denham is exceeding sick, even to death, and that she says and everybody else discourses that she is poisoned." The next day it was reported she was dead, although she was better. We hear nothing further until January 7th. "Lady Denham is at last dead," says Pepys. "Some suspect her poisoned, but it will be best known when her body is opened, which will be to-day, she dying yesterday morning." But on the following day he tells us that nothing was found to suggest foul play. In a letter from Lord Orrery, dated January 25th, he says: "My Lady Denham's body, at her own desire, was opened, but no sign of poison was found."¹ Still, notwithstanding proofs to the contrary, not only her husband was suspected of making away with her, but also the Duchess of York, and even the

¹ Orrery State Papers, p. 219.

Countess of Rochester,¹ who, as far as is known, had no particular grudge against her. According to Gramont, Sir John ran some risk of being roughly handled, as public feeling went very much against him, and he had to shut himself up in his house in Scotland Yard until the "fury was appeased by a magnificent funeral, at which he distributed four times more burnt wine than had ever been drunk at any burial in England." The young beauty was interred in the middle of the chancel of St. Margaret's, Westminster, but the stone tablet bears no inscription.

Jesse is in error when he says that Denham survived his wife several years, for he died in March, 1668-69, having for some little time before so far regained his reason that he could pen poetry as well as ever. But one would have thought the subject of jealous husbands would have been for him a delicate one to touch upon. Yet in his verses on Cowley's death, more, perhaps, from force of habit than anything else, he makes an allusion that seems strangely out of place.

From the antiquary Aubrey we get a fairly realistic description of Sir John Denham. He describes him as being tall with rather bent shoulders, with a limp in his long, ungainly stride. He had fair curly hair, and a

¹ Aubrey's "Letters of Eminent Men." N.B.—Aubrey cannot have meant the Countess of Rochester at that date, who would have been the mother of John Wilmot, the second Earl. He must have meant the Countess of later date, Anne Hyde's sister-in-law.

strange piercing look in his light grey eyes. He looked older than he really was by some twenty years or more, which perhaps was the result of dissipation in his youth, for he preferred the gaming table and other diversions to his books when he was at Oxford University. "He was generally temperate in drinking, but one time when he was a student of Lincoln's Inn, having been merry at a tavern with his comrades late at night, a frolic came into his head to get a plasterer's brush and a pot of ink and blot out all the signs between Temple Bar and Charing Cross, which made a strange confusion the next day, as it was in term time; but it happened that they were discovered, and it cost him and them some moneys. This," says Aubrey, "I had from R. Estcourt, Esquire, who carried the inkpot." According to the writer, Denham was not a wit, although the anecdote he tells of him should certainly rank him as such. "In the time of the civill warres," he says, "Geo. Withers, the poet, begged Sir Jo. Denham's estate of the Parliament, in whose cause he was a captaine of horse. It (happened) that G. W. was taken prisoner, and was in danger of his life, having written severely against the King. Sir John Denham went to the King and desired his ma^{tie} not to hang him, for that whilest G. W. lived, he should not be the worst poet in England." This at least shows us that he was modest, for some of his verse can be compared favourably with that of the majority of his contemporaries. Evelyn (who, by the way, spoke very forcibly of his wife's lack

of modesty ¹) had a higher opinion of Sir John's genius as a poet than an architect.² Royal favour had pitchforked him into the position of Surveyor to the Crown, which was held before and after him by the two geniuses, Inigo Jones and Sir Christopher Wren. Denham, aware of his weakness, relied mainly on the former's pupil, John Webb. The first Burlington House in Piccadilly was built by him. Sir John died in March 1668-69, leaving children only by his first wife (a Miss Cotton, of Gloucestershire).

The other beautiful Miss Brooke, his sister-in-law, Lady Whitmore, had three daughters by her first husband, one of whom, Frances, also a great beauty, married (secondly) Sir Richard Myddelton (the third baronet) of Chirk Castle. Her full-length portrait by Kneller hangs in William III.'s Presence Chamber at Hampton Court.³ The date of the death of her mother is unknown. She predeceased her second husband, Mathew Harvey, a nephew of the great physician, who died in 1690. Upon her monument in Twickenham Church, bearing a shield with the arms of Harvey impaling Brooke, may be read an epitaph by Dryden.

Hill, the eldest of the three Misses Brooke, married a Derbyshire baronet, Sir Brooke Boothby, of Ashbourne Hall, which in the '45 was Bonny Prince Charlie's headquarters when he came so far south on

¹ *Vide* Pepys' Diary, September 26, 1666.

² *Vide* Evelyn's Diary, October 19, 1661. ³ See *ante*, p. 261.

his famous march towards the Metropolis. Of Hill's good looks we know nothing, but a descendant, Penelope Boothby, is described by her monumental inscription as being "in form most exquisite," an assertion fully borne out by her graceful sculptured figure.

Among the ladies of the Court of Charles II. whose ambition, according to the satirical writings of the day, it was to occupy the position held by the Duchess of Portsmouth, were the two beauties, Miss Fraser and Miss Lawson.¹ This was in 1679, many years after the youngest Miss Brooke had been introduced at Court to attract the King's notice. In a similar way Miss Lawson had been pushed forward by her aunt, Mary Villiers, Duchess of Richmond, so the lady may be acquitted of voluntarily trying to advance her own interests in opposition to the declining influence of the French mistress. Indeed, Miss or "Mrs." Lawson as she is usually called, according to Sir William Musgrave was far too modest.²

Miss Lawson's father, Sir John, of Brough, in Yorkshire, was created a baronet in 1665, and must not be confounded with the ex-parliamentarian who aided in the Restoration, and was vice-admiral in the squadron which accompanied the King to Dover. Her uncle, Colonel Thomas Howard,³ the younger brother of the

¹ See "Cullen and his Flock of Misses," 1679.

² Musgrave's "Biographical Adversaria."

³ Son of Sir William Howard, whose grandfather, Lord William Howard, was the great-grandson of Thomas, third Duke of Norfolk, the uncle of Queen Catherine Howard.



MISS LAWSON



Earl of Carlisle, was the third husband of Mary Villiers, the widowed Duchess of Richmond,¹ sister of George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham. The beauty, therefore, had plenty of influence behind her to place her, with or against her will, in the much envied position. But it may be presumed that "Mrs." Lawson did not succumb to the temptations, otherwise the probability is we should have heard more about her. As it is her name rarely occurs in contemporary writings. The particular lady who gained the day, at the time there is said to have been this competition before alluded to, was a daughter of Richard, Earl Ranelagh. "The King hath a new mistress, Lord R(ane)'s daughter," writes Henry Sidney in his diary on March 9, 1679-80, either Lady Katherine who died unmarried in 1740, or Lady Elizabeth who became Countess of Kildare in 1684, and died in 1757 at the age of ninety-three.

Whether Miss Lawson took the veil or married, must be left in uncertainty. A "Mrs." Lawson—possibly the same who in January, 1681-82, in Lady Anne Howe's opinion was undeservedly "cried up" for her good looks²—was at the close of 1684 married at Paris to "Lord Grey of Ruthens."³ On the other hand, Sir William Musgrave asserts that the five

¹ Wife of James Stuart, third Duke of Richmond. See also *ante*, pp. 173-4.

² Belvoir MSS., Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 12, App. pt. ii. p. 64.

³ *Ibid.*, pt. ii. p. 85.

daughters of Sir John Lawson all become nuns at York.¹

In Wissing's portrait of the beauty at Hampton Court she looks both modest and amiable. Her expression is sweeter than many of the fashionable ladies of the period surrounding her in the "Beauty Room." Mrs. Jameson, however, was wrong in calling the picture one of the original "Windsor Beauties," as it did not belong to the original twelve, but was painted towards the close of Charles II.'s reign, or in that of James II., judging from the costume and mode of wearing the hair.

Carey Fraser, or Fraizer, the handsome daughter of Charles II.'s head physician, who eventually became the wife of the great Lord Peterborough, judging from her portrait by Kneller, also at Hampton Court, possessed greater strength of character and was less unassuming than Miss Lawson. Her father, Sir Alexander Fraser, a Scotchman by birth, was a favourite with Charles and Lady Castlemaine.² He dabbled in politics as well as physic, and was useful in both capacities. Lord Chancellor Clarendon said the doctor was "good at his business, otherwise the maddest fool alive,"³ but for all that, when the Princess Royal died (in December, 1660), his treatment of his patient

¹ Mrs. Jameson's "Beauties of the Court of Charles II.," p. 188.

² Carey Fraser's mother was "dresser" to the Queen.

³ Letter from Sir Edward Hyde to Sir Richard Browne, 1652: Evelyn's Correspondence.



CAREY FRASER
COUNTESS OF PETERBOROUGH



met with much censure at the time.¹ Nor was his opinion of the malady from which the Queen was suffering in 1673 much to be relied upon, for he then said she had consumption and would not last above a year.² But as Pepys tells, not too delicately, he was a useful man in many ways, and could do what he liked with the easy-going monarch.

The physician's pretty daughter, it goes without saying, was also a favourite with the King, so much so that early in 1678, when the Duchess of Portsmouth was not in too great favour, she and "Mrs." Elliot (another beauty of the Court³) it was thought stood an equal chance of succeeding the French mistress. But, as before stated, Miss Fraser was not the successful candidate, and for some reason we learn in May, 1680, "is marched off from Court," and succeeded as Maid of Honour to the Duchess of York by the daughter of Colonel Edward Villiers.⁴

Among the lady's admirers was Sir Carr Scrope, a

¹ See Pepys' Diary, December 26, 1660.

² Colbert to Louvois, February 20, 1673. *Vide* "Louise de Keroualle," p. 80.

³ Probably the daughter of Tom Elliot, groom of the bedchamber to Charles II. The lady, however, may have been his second wife, the sister of Secretary Craggs of whom there is a portrait by Riley in Queen Mary's Gallery, Kensington Palace. Elliot's first wife was the daughter of Christabella Wyndham, *née* Pyne, niece of Colonel Francis Wyndham of Trent, in Somerset, *vide* "After Worcester Fight," p. 239.

⁴ Verney Papers, Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 7, App. p. 496.

diminutive man of fashion, and a rival scribe of Rochester, who described him as :

“Half witty and half mad, and scarce half brave,
Half honest (which is very near a knave).
Made up of all these halves, thou cans't not pass
For anything entirely, but an ass.”¹

But though this gay spark was much in love with her, his courtship was also half-hearted, as her extravagance in dress made him come to the conclusion that his estate would hardly keep her in clothes. Miss Fraser's gown of ermine and velvet, embroidered and lined with cloth of gold, at the Queen's birthday ball in November, 1676, indeed would justify such unromantic calculations. “The clothes last night,” says Lady Chaworth, writing on the sixteenth of the month, “at the Queene's birth-night ball was infinite rich, especially M^{is}. Phraser, who put downe all for a gowne black velvet imbroidered with all sorts of ships imbost worke of gold and silver and peticote one broad ermine and gold lace all over. Yet I doe not aprove the fancy of either, though they say cost 800l, but her face and shape must be aproved by every body.”²

The writer of the above discloses in another letter two months afterwards a quarrel between Sir Carr and Catherine Sedley (a lady far more notorious for her wit and coarse language than for her beauty)³ in the

¹ See “Rochester and other Literary Rakes,” p. 283.

² Belvoir MSS., Hist. MSS. Com. Rep. 12, App. pt. ii. pp. 31, 32.

³ Ibid., pt. ii. p. 37.

Queen's drawing-room, a place one would think ill-fitted for the exchange of such delicate compliments. But it is only fair to Miss Fraser not to repeat an attack from such a quarter.¹ Like Sir Carr, her husband, Charles Mordaunt, third Earl of Peterborough,² was a little man and much given to gallantry — "the ramblingest lying rogue on earth," according to Swift, but for all that very polished in manner and a good husband, besides being a famous soldier. After the decease of his Countess, who died in 1709 of quinsy, he became enamoured of the singer, Anastasia Robinson, whom he privately married in 1722, but she was not acknowledged as the Countess of Peterborough until the year of her death thirteen years afterwards.

As previously stated, Carey Fraser represents one of the full-length Kneller "Beauties" at Hampton Court which were painted by order of William III.'s queen to rival the Lely set then at Windsor.

¹ See *ante*, p. 154.

² The earldom came to him in 1697, on the death of his uncle, the old Cavalier who had married James II.'s second queen by proxy, see *ante*, pp. 147-8.

MADemoISELLE DE LA VALLIÈRE AND THE MARChIONESS DE MONTESPAN

OF the two beauties, La Vallière and Montespan, the ladies in the train of Madame, the latter was her companion's senior by three years. She was as gay and laughter-loving as the other was timid and reserved. Montespan was a witty coquette full of ambition; La Vallière a sincere and simple-minded girl, but ill adapted to the position she was raised to. La Vallière was a blonde, famous for her soft and loving blue eyes and luxurious golden hair; Montespan a less ethereal and romantic damsel, impetuous and proud and gifted with a fund of ready wit. It was the marked contrast, no doubt, which brought the elder into favour when La Vallière's star had set. The romance of the first attachment was succeeded by the gayer and more brilliant companionship which perhaps was necessary to redeem the French King's qualms of conscience when he parted with one so devotedly attached as she had been. But although the Grand Monarque had tears which could flow upon occasions, he was not much troubled with a conscience, and with all his



LOUISE DE LA VALLIÈRE



LOUISE DE LA VALLIÈRE



flourish of romantic and sentimental ideas was selfish and heartless to a degree.

Louise Francoise Labaume Leblanc de La Vallière was not yet seventeen when, impersonating a nymph in one of the fairy fêtes at Fontainebleau, her beauty attracted Louis's notice. The modest maid of honour could ill conceal the effect of such marked attention, and her blushes plainly showed that a fire had been kindled in her own heart. The King's vanity was flattered, for nothing appealed to him like flattery. The attractions of Madame, the Duchess, grew less in his eyes as he contemplated the dove-like grace of her fair attendant, but her presence in the train of his sister-in-law made his Majesty's visits more conspicuous than ever they had been, with the result that in a fit of jealousy Henrietta desired La Vallière to resign her position. Conscience-stricken, Louise fled on foot that night to hide her shame in a convent near Saint-Cloud. Next day it was noised abroad that the Queen-mother, who for some time had had her suspicions, had ordered her removal from Court. The King, now abandoning further attempt at concealment of his secret amour, immediately went in search of the runaway, and tracing her movements to the convent persuaded the Lady Superior to deliver her into his hands.

La Vallière once more was installed in Madame's household, but under the understanding that she was there only as the King's property. In 1663, however, her position was so far recognised that she occupied a

separate establishment at the Palais Brion. Madame de Montespan relates the story of how the young Marquis de Bragelonne, desperately in love with La Vallière before her fall, went abroad to seek his fortune that he might lay it at her feet ; but upon his return, laden with riches from the new world, he heard to his dismay that his old love was now "Madame la Duchesse," the King's mistress. Heart-broken, he crept into an adjacent wood and ran his sword through his body.

The title of Duchess de Vaujours and De La Vallière was given to Louise shortly after the birth of her daughter, Mademoiselle de Blois,¹ afterwards Princess de Conti. Her first child Louis, born in 1663, only lived three years. The Count de Vermandois, her second son, died in 1683. But we shall refer to him again. It was some six years after his first infatuation for La Vallière that Louis's affection for her began to wane. Her clinging, trustful nature was wasted on a man like him. The wiles of her friend and rival, whose ambition was to succeed her in as amiable a way as possible, were beginning to have deadly effect. Montespan notes in her *Memoirs* how his Majesty's usual playful badinage was inclining towards a serious attachment. She had studied her victim well, and knew how to please where her rival failed. Sentimental love-making palled upon Louis.

¹ She must not be confounded with Mademoiselle de Blois, the King's daughter by Madame de Montespan, see p. 296.

He found far more pleasure in the superior intellectual powers and ready wit of Athenais de Tonnay-Charente, Marchioness de Montespan. According to Touchard-Lafosse her type of beauty was of a more sensual nature. Her build altogether was more robust than poor La Vallière, who was slight in form and a little lame. The full-blown beauty of twenty-seven with evident pride saw that her ambitious hopes were shortly to be accomplished. The King was bored and sought relief in her society. "I do not profess to be a prodigy," she says, "but those who know me do me the justice to admit that where I am it is very difficult for boredom to find ever so small a footing. Mademoiselle de la Vallière, after having begged me, and begged me often, to come and help her to entertain the King, grew suddenly suspicious and uneasy. She is candour itself, and one day, bursting into tears, she said to me in that voice peculiar to her alone, 'For Heaven's sake, my good friend, do not steal away the King's heart from me!'"

Poor La Vallière's idealistic dream was at an end when she was left out of the Court functions at the time of the Flanders campaign. She made an effort to assert her rights by following in the train of the Queen, but was delicately ordered back to Versailles, while her rival was kept in close attendance. That lady's duty to her husband never troubled her head. Much against her will her relations had made a match for her with the wealthy Marquis de Montespan, a

member of one of the first families in France, but not otherwise particularly remarkable. The Marchioness considered herself far and away his superior, mentally. Her conceit reminds one of Marie Bashkirtseff. "I was not slow to perceive," she says, "that there was in my person something slightly superior to the average intelligence—certain qualities of distinction which drew upon me the attention and the sympathy of men of good taste. Had my liberty been granted to it, my heart would have made a choice worthy alike of my family and of myself." The idea of presiding as mistress of the Château de Montespan in the Pyrenees was entirely distasteful to one accustomed to gaiety and flattery. At this period there seems to have been the same tendency as in recent years for the gentler sex to assert their independence. For a time the Marquis vainly tried to insist on his marital authority, but with the all-powerful King in the background encouraging the wife's rebellion, he soon saw his hopeless position. His little son, the Marquis d'Antin, notwithstanding many attempts to abduct him, remained under his mother's control, but as a providential punishment for her sins never revealed any great attachment for her.

She had already presented the King with two sons before the Queen was aware that the lady in close attendance upon her and in whom she confided was her rival. Time healed these little difficulties in the royal household, and the Marchioness's presence was borne as a necessary evil, indeed in time Marie Thérèse



COUNT DE VERMANDOIS



MADAME DE MONTESPAN



showed herself very well disposed towards Athenais's children, from the fact, perhaps, that most of her own died prematurely. She was nevertheless naturally jealous of them, and when their talent showed itself in various ways superior to that of the little Dauphin the Queen could ill conceal her chagrin. The Marchioness's first child, the little Comte de Vexin, died in infancy. Louis Cæsar, the second Comte de Vexin, lived to 1683. In his usual theatrical way Louis created these children Abbés of Saint-Germain and Saint-Denis, and they were duly dressed in ecclesiastical attire with the mitre, crozier and cross painted on the panels of their regal carriages. But one of them at least rebelled against the ceremonies of their calling. When after the nomination of the second Comte the monks of Saint-Denis came forward to make their obeisance, the little Abbé caused considerable offence by asking if they were devils! Louis Auguste, Duc du Maine, of whom his mother was so proud that she said she could never be blamed in the next world for bringing into this so perfect a being, was born in 1670. He grew up to be a handsome but not too good-natured a youth, and married, after his mother's retirement from Court, Louisa, the granddaughter of the great Condé. It was this son whom Louis XIV. would have liked to succeed him. He died in 1736. Mademoiselle de Tours, the Marchioness's eldest daughter, died in 1681. Mademoiselle de Nantes, afterwards Duchess of Bour-

bon and Princess de Condé, like her mother, was full of animation and wit. She lived to 1743. Mademoiselle de Blois, afterwards Duchess of Orleans, the Regent's wife, lived to 1749. Lastly, the little Comte de Toulouse, who as an infant was created by his royal father High Admiral of France, who died in 1737. He was such a pretty child that the King's haughty cousin, the Duchess de Montpensier, had him specially painted for her art gallery, as the God of the Sea, floating on a pearl shell.

The other Mademoiselle de Blois, Princess de Conti, La Vallière's legitimatised daughter (who lived to 1739), was the most beautiful and best beloved of Louis's children. Like her mother, she had a particularly sweet disposition. The Marchioness describes her as the "handsomest, most charming person it is possible to imagine. Her slim, graceful figure reminds one of the beautiful goddesses with whom poets entertain us; she abounds in accomplishments and every sort of charm. Her tender solicitude for her mother and their constant close companionship have doubtless served to quicken her intelligence and penetration. Like the King, she is somewhat grave; she has the same large brown eyes, and just his Austrian lip, his shapely hand, and well-turned leg, almost his selfsame voice." The Princess's brother, the Count de Vermandois, also grew up to be very handsome, and in some respects resembled the King. He had the same dark complexion and graceful figure,



MADemoiselle DE BLOIS, AND MADemoiselle DE NANTES



although he was shorter in stature. In his military training he bid fair to make a fine soldier. Louis was overjoyed to hear good reports of his bravery in active service, when one day came the news from camp of his death, he then being only in his seventeenth year. With his decease his post of High Admiral passed, as before stated, to the little Comte de Toulouse.

La Vallière meanwhile had retired from the world of gaiety. The fickleness of the man she had worshipped had broken her heart, and she sought consolation by taking the veil. Her beauty, however, far from fading under the rigid discipline of convent life, became more alluring than ever. The pain of parting with her children had prevented her from taking this step before, and as she did not go into seclusion before 1674, for some years she had to endure the triumph of her rival. The best proof of her generous disposition lay in the fact that she showed but little resentment to the treacherous way in which her friend had supplanted her. We find the second mistress in her gorgeous carriage paying a visit to the Carmelite nun of the Rue Saint Jacques some six years after her investiture. The former had not yet fallen into disfavour, but her career was pretty well over.

Here is a subject for the historical painter. The former favourite in her sombre garb conferring with her gaily-bedecked successor. Returning to the Palace the Marchioness drew the curtains of her carriage that

people might not see her tears—tears shed rather for her own future than for the humiliation of her friend. While the gentle La Vallière cherished no resentment against her former rival, the same cannot be said of the Marquise's feeling towards the ex-governess of her children who eventually took her place. To Montespan the widow of the poet Scarron owed her advance from poverty to affluence.

Françoise d'Aubigné, afterwards Marquise de Maintenon, was Athenais's senior by six years, and when she succeeded her patroness, first as mistress and afterwards as the King's legal wife, she was well on the way to fifty. But she had the advantage of looking if anything younger than her rival. Compared with Montespan hers was a less seductive beauty, although her fine figure and complexion and eyes of smiling vivacity made her exceedingly attractive in appearance. But it was her intellectual and not so much her personal charms which brought her into prominence. King Louis at first was rather afraid of her reserved and dignified mien, but in his intercourse with his children under her charge it was not long before her insinuating but respectful manner won his esteem. Nobody could converse on almost any subject with such fluency and animation, moreover, she had the tact of a statesman and the reasoning powers of a philosopher. Little wonder, therefore, that Louis should often find more pleasure in her company than with the more flippant ladies of the Court. As her



MADemoiselle DE FONTANGES



MARQUISE DE MAINTENON

influence increased so the Marquise de Montespan became embittered against her. But on her side Maintenon rarely resented the affronts that Athenais frequently put upon her.

When Marie Thérèse, the good and much injured Queen, died in 1683, it was her express wish that the influence of Maintenon should continue. Rather that, perhaps, than that the King should relapse into another infatuation with a less worthy woman such as Mademoiselle de Fontanges, who had a brief career some three years before the Queen's decease. This beautiful blonde was brought to Louis's notice by the Marquise de Montespan, a dangerous introduction, as it severely undermined her own power; in fact, from that time she was clearly made to understand that her presence at Court was somewhat superfluous. These hints, however, were thrown away on one who had held unopposed sway so long, although truly her jealousy caused her to make a temporary retirement.

The reign of the youthful Fontanges was as brilliant as it was brief. The theatrical fêtes at Fontainebleau were more gorgeous even than in poor La Vallière's time. Louis abandoned his learned debates with Maintenon, and decked himself out anew with peacock plumage. When she was created Duchess the new mistress also lost her head and rode the high horse even in presence of the Queen, omitting to pay her decent respect. One wonders after this that the Queen should have deigned to have stooped to the new fashion

of arranging her head dress with streaming ribbons, "à la Fontanges!" But there was a gloomy sequel to all these frivolities. After eight months had passed away the pretty girl was taken desperately ill and died. Her parting interview with Louis as she lay on her bed in the Convent Val de Grâce between life and death made a deep and lasting impression, which helped to add to the gloom of the latter part of his reign.

When "Madame Solidity" (the pet name of Louis for the ex-governess) was married to the King, Montespan, like the rest, had to go and do homage. It went very much against the grain to make the usual "three pauses and three reverences," and then receive a sign to be seated on a stool at the great lady's feet. She, however, was more graciously received than she deserved, but it was a day of bitter humiliation after being practically first favourite for eighteen years. As she passed out of the royal presence there were many who had cringed before her only too ready to triumph over her downfall, and as she passed out to her carriage she could see the great monarch coldly watching her departure from a balcony overlooking the courtyard of the palace. Though practically ordered to remove her quarters, the Marquise de Montespan, after all, was let down very gently from her high position, and was always welcome when she showed her face at Versailles, which was not often. Her proud spirit would never allow her to forgive the triumph of the former governess of her children ; but she had still a liking for

her old love, and whenever she had the opportunity, tried to catch a glimpse of him when he rode into the country in his coach. In 1691 she retired for a time to the Abbey of Fontevrault, her husband having shown no particular desire to give her a warm welcome after so long an absence.

But her principal place of abode was Paris, where she lived luxuriously on her annual pension of six hundred thousand livres. On May 28, 1707, the Marquis de Dangeau enters in his diary, "Before the King set out for the chase we learned that Madame de Montespan died at Bourbon yesterday at three in the morning." She made a yearly excursion there to take the waters. The Marquise's wedding-ring was a strange gift to the religious establishment of Fontevrault. Her heart was willed there also, and her entrails! The last handsome bequest, however, never reached its destination. The boatman who had charge of the casket was afraid of infection and wisely dropped the treasure overboard.

La Vallière outlived the Marquise three years. "Louise de la Miséricorde felt herself yesterday very ill and in great danger," says Dangeau on June 6, 1710. "The intelligence came here at eleven at night; but they would not wake the Princess de Conti, who is unwell, and who is taking the waters. Her mother's illness having increased to-night, she was waked early. She went to the Carmelites, and her mother expired in her arms; she found her almost insensible; however, she showed some signs of life and of affection. She

even attempted to speak to her and utter a few words, but the dreadful pains she suffered stopped her speech. She had suffered greatly for some time past, and had made known her disorder to the Princess de Conti six months ago. She died like a Saint; and up to the moment when she lost all perception, she made an offering of her sufferings to God, thinking that she did not suffer sufficiently."¹

The Marquise de Maintenon died in 1719, at the age of eighty-three, having outlived Louis's long reign four years. Latterly the Grand Monarque had been almost entirely governed by her will and had become dull and ascetic. The Court functions, once so brilliant and gay, were dismal and depressing. There is an interesting picture in the Wallace Collection of the Royal Family, painted in the latter part of the reign. A most funereal looking group. Compare his sombre Majesty as he is seen here with his early portraits bedecked with coloured plumes and ribbons. Little wonder that the younger generation at Court should gather round the Duc du Maine and the Duc d'Orleans to escape the rigid monotony. The latter, as before stated, had married the Marquise de Montespan's youngest daughter. The pet name given to her by her husband was Madame Satan, but their daughter, Marie Louise d'Orleans (afterwards Duchess de Berry), appears to have deserved that title more than she. This famous beauty is said to have been a rival to her own

¹ "Memoirs of the Marquis de Dangeau," vol. ii. p. 231.

mother, as was also her sister, the Duchess of Modena. Of the latter Horace Walpole relates the following anecdote: "When I was in Italy in my youth," he says, "I went to a ball at Reggio, and was placed next to the Duchess of Modena. This circumstance, and my being known as the son of the English Minister, engaged me to say something polite, as I thought, to the Duchess. I asked her the reason why she did not dance. She answered that her mother always said she danced ill, and would not allow her to join in that diversion. 'I suppose,' replied I, in complete innocence, 'that your mother was jealous of you.' Her face was all scarlet in an instant, and she seemed ready to sink into the ground. I very hastily withdrew and took my politeness along with me!"¹

Judging from a miniature of the Duchess by Boit, in the South Kensington Museum, her features were not unlike those of Marie Antoinette.

A fine painting of her by Largillière was lent to the Portrait Exhibition of the Palais du Trocadéro in 1878, by the Duchess de Bojano. Here also were paintings by Mignard of the rivals La Vallière and Montespan.² In the Jones collection at South Kensington there are beautiful miniatures by Petitot of these two ladies, and of their successor, Maintenon, who of the three has the sweetest expression. In the loan exhibition here of

¹ "Walpoliana," vol. ii. pp. 97, 98.

² The former belonging to Monsieur de Berquier, the latter to the Musée de Troyes.

1865, there was a remarkable snuff-box which came originally from the cabinet of the Marquis de la Reignére, covered with medallion portraits of the celebrated beauties of Louis XIV.'s Court. Including the three just named, were also the Duchesses de Fontanges, Mazarin, Brissac, Nevers, and Sforce, the Countesses de Grignan and de la Suze, the Princess de Conti, Mademoiselle Dupré, and Ninon de L'Enclos.

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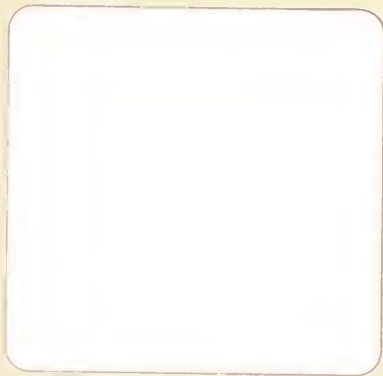
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